



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hey there, my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. If you're new, I'm so glad you're joining me today. I have a real good one for you. I think I say that pretty much every episode, but I do mean it. I actually have been thinking about this for several weeks, and I decided that today is the day. Today's the day I'm going to share it with you.

And I just want to mention in the U.S. here, 4th of July. July 4th is our Independence Day, and that's going to be coming up. So, when this comes out live, it's going to be just a few days before 4th of July. And so, I just want to wish you some fun. I hope that if you live in the U.S. and you're celebrating, and I think July 1st is Canada Day. And then those of you who don't live here in North America, you can just celebrate with us in solidarity. But anyway, it's just such a fun time to be able to enjoy the summer. And I'm so excited to be able to be outside again. Our neighborhood, our city has this really fun parade that's just very much like a regular small town parade type of thing. And it's just a slice of Americana. That's what I've called it for many years. We moved here in 2002. I've been to many of those parades. It's literally just a half a block from my house. It's so fun. We just walk down there and enjoy ourselves and just have a good time. It's just a nice long weekend. So, I hope that you have fun, you have something good planned.

That has been something that's actually been really fun about this summer is just the possibilities that are opening up, thinking about, oh, and then we could go do this and then we could go there. And my oldest son just had a voice recital, and they had it outside at a park that has a band shell. And it was just so nice to hear live music again. And all the kids were singing. It was so nice to hear them. And his teacher, who has just a beautiful voice, she sang a couple of times. It was just so heartwarming, even though in the middle of it there was a complete downpour. Luckily, we were prepared. We knew it might rain. And we were cold, but it was so worth it.

Lately, I was telling my husband, I'm like, "We should try going to the opera here. We've never been there. We've never been the opera here in town. We should check them out. And maybe we should go to the ballet." I'm just so starved for the arts. I want to go to everything. I want to see all the shows. I want to hear all the live music. I'm just so excited. And do have a couple trips planned to see some friends and go on a family trip, and I'm just excited about it. It's it feels like a breath of fresh air. We're coming out of things.

And as I've been coming out of all of this, it's been interesting to see what has developed, and that's what I want to talk to you about today.

Okay, so what I want to talk to you about today is the concept, I'm calling them re-epiphanies. Sometimes I also talk about re-remembering things. And what I mean by that is a concept that I know that I've probably even understood on a deeper and deeper level, possibly several times, that somehow has faded from the forefront of my mind, and I've had to really-remember it yet again. And I feel like a re-epiphany is when I've already had the epiphany on this concept, maybe also again several times, and then having it yet again and understanding it on a deeper level.

So, just to give you the backstory of where this has come from. So, if you've been listening to the podcasts for any length of time, you would know that my original office wasn't even really an office. It was basically a cloffice, a closet office. It was very tiny. Over the years I've had a few people who I've worked with come and see it, and they're like, "Oh my gosh. Wow. That is really something else." I'm like, "I know. Oh, I know. It really is."

And so I decided, really it was a year-and-a-half ago I decided, you know what? I have this attic space. I'm going to turn this into an office for me. And we were just about ready to go when COVID hit. Well, and when I say just about ready to go, meaning we had signed with a company, they were going to help us do it and everything. And what ended up happening is that there were just some other issues that I'm going to get into with you because it'd be very boring, but there were some issues that made it so that this company couldn't work with us.

And so, then of course with COVID, it was kind of like what's going to happen? We probably don't want workers in our house. So, the whole project was put on hold. Meanwhile, I'm trying to work from my closet office while homeschooling kids and all of that. And when I say homeschooling, I mean sometimes we talk about homeschooling. I mean, the teachers were schooling them and I was assisting. I just don't want to take away from people who actually do real homeschooling where they are actually creating a curriculum and actually teaching their children. But it was still something I was not used to doing. I was used to being very productive when they were in school and getting a lot of things done. And as so many of you understand, that was no longer the case.

So then I decided, okay, you know what? I'm going to get this done. I'm going to figure this out. And basically ended up general contracting it myself, which is not something I ever wanted to do, but I really wanted to get the project done. Probably in your area, if you've wanted to do any home improvement project, you've noticed as well that the people who do that work are extremely busy, and basically people didn't need work. And I was just like, okay, I'm just going to get this thing done.

And so, it ended up taking about seven, eight months to get it all done, which was much longer than I expected. It was really just like a refresh of the space, but it just took a really long time for a variety of reasons. And during that time, since I was contracting it, I was the person that people were asking all the questions to. And the location of my closet office was right by the side door and right by the bathroom that the workers would use. And the doors to that closet office are French doors, so that means they have glass in them, which means that I couldn't really just shut a door and signal like, hey, you can't interrupt me.

And so, it depended on which workers were there, but some of them would just on their timeline, like, "Hey, we need to talk to you right now." And there was a lot of managing, a lot of conversations, a lot of answering questions, a lot of emails, a lot of coordination of things.

And the thing is, when it comes to details, I totally can do that work. I just really don't like to. I'm much more comfortable in a big picture role. So, like I said, I can do the details. I just prefer not to. It's very draining for me to do them. But a construction project is a whole pile of details.

So, what was happening was that I was doing all this, and it was very exciting. As the project's coming together, it's so exciting and so great. And of course there's complications. You know projects. So, I live in old house. So, it's like you never know what you're going to find when it comes to an old house. So anyway, what was happening was that my ability to be productive during the day was becoming more and more limited, even though my kids were in school, or at least most days in school.

And so, what I started doing, because as I kind of hinted to when I was talking about the updates that we've done to the program, my weight loss for doctors only program which is really my flagship program, my team and I had decided even before COVID that we wanted to refresh it and do a whole redo of it and really update it and make it... It was already a great program, but just making it even better.

And so, I was just thinking like, okay, I'll just get the parts that I have to do, which is a lot of it. I'll just get that done here and there. Well, it turns out that from a content creation standpoint, my brain doesn't work too well in fits and spurts. A little 20 minutes here and then being interrupted, and then this thing over there and then being interrupted. It just was like really getting challenging for me.

So, what I decided to do was to start working on the weekends thinking, well, I don't have workers here on the weekends. Maybe I'll take like one weekend day to work, or I'll just work a couple hours. Now, just to let you know, I generally speaking have been very, very protective of my weekends because I need that break. I just need that break. And so, I was thinking, well, I'm not really doing as much work as I would like to during the weekdays. I'll just do it on the weekend.

And so, I started getting a bunch done on the weekends, and that was actually... it felt great. So, I was like, I'm making progress, I'm getting all this stuff done, I'm banging this out, and it was feeling awesome. I think, you know what I'm talking about, that feeling where you're just like, oh my God, this is so great. Like yes, I'm making progress. It's so good.

But as I was doing that, I started noticing that I was looking at the deadlines and things I had to do. And of course, I'd procrastinated a little bit on some certain things. And I started realizing like, oh my gosh, if I'm going to get this done by this deadline, which was a hard deadline, really was not that flexible, then I maybe needed to work both weekend days. So, now I was working all day Saturday, all day Sunday, not spending time with the family, not resting and relaxing. And then during the week, I was living in a construction zone.

And I was trying to get some things done and I was getting the bare minimum done in that sense, but I was saving all of the other like meaningful work that I needed to do for those weekends. So, I was just thinking, this was just a means to an end. It's really just like maybe six weeks I'll do this. It's really not that long. And then the deadline arrives and I got it done. I got it done like I knew I would.

But then it was like the next thing that I had to do, and then we were recording all the videos professionally, and then we were looking at the next thing and the next thing, and all these different details. And before I knew it, I was like, oh my God. Look at this. Here was the re-epiphany funny, I'm totally overworking again. Now I completely overworked when I was in practice as a pediatrician. I had this overly developed sense of responsibility that I felt like these patients really needed me, and I needed to be available for them. And I would stay late, and I would just bend over backwards to try to take good care of these patients at my own expense, at my family's expense. And honestly, a lot of it was from a people-pleasing standpoint, too.

When I treated them this way, they loved me, and I wanted them to love me. So, I thought this is the way to do it. I was very confused at this time in the sense that I did not have coaching I didn't know anything about this kind of stuff. And so, this is just how I was living my life, and then I was wondering why I was starting to feel sometimes a little resentful and just feeling exhausted and whatever. So anyway, that was one time that I overworked.

And then even in this weight loss coaching business that I've created, there have been actually a couple of times where I have gotten totally back into overworking. I remember the first time realizing what I was doing, and I was like, oh my gosh, this feels strangely familiar to what it was like when I was in practice. Look at that. Turns out it's not the job. Turns out it's me. I'm the one who will go back into being overly responsible, and wanting to be available for people at all hours, and telling myself stories about what people expect even though they haven't even said that, and then giving them all of that.

And so, I know this work of stopping over working, and that's exactly what happened here again where I was like, oh my gosh, it's another re-epiphany. I've done it again. The way I was thinking about it is it's almost like I feel like there's this low powered magnet that is the overworking magnet. And if I'm not aware and I don't really stay focused on it, it will just continually start to... it will just have this low powered whatever magnetic force, that's what it's called, pulling me in. And it's so subtle and so slow that it's hard to pick up on it in the moment. And then all of a sudden I'm stuck to the magnet again. I'm like, oh my God, how did this happen?

And of course, as it's happening, I'm totally justifying all of it, because it's just a short time and I just have to get this thing done, and there really is a deadline. And it all sounds like it makes sense, but it still leads to that overworking. I had all these stories. Like I'd go work somewhere else or I'd go work at a coffee shop if I could, but nothing is open because it's COVID. I had very sad story. And it was cold here, so I couldn't really go work in my car anywhere. There was like nowhere to go. I felt stuck in my own house. It was honestly very disempowering kind of a feeling.

So, what I've been working on now the last several weeks, probably about a month or so, is working through that re-epiphany and really understanding, again, how I have gotten myself into this. And I'm the only one who can get myself in, and I'm the only one who can get myself out. So, I've made some changes. I've canceled some things that I had planned for. There's several things going on that I was just like, you know what? I don't think we're going to do that this year. It's just too much. I need to be taking care of myself.

And the reason why the overworking is such a problem, just to mention this, because some people will be like, oh my God, I love working 80 hours a week. I love what I do. It's amazing. It's my favorite thing. It's not that it's not my favorite thing. I do love what I do. I love it a lot. It's just that what I start to notice are other symptoms. This was actually the biggest trigger for me is we achieved a big goal that we have in the business, and I literally have no emotions about it. I wasn't happy. I wasn't negative about it. I was literally just like, that happened. And I was like, wow, that's really interesting that I'm not more excited. What's that all about?

And I was telling a friend about it. She was like, "This might sound like a little bit of burnout. You might have a touch of the burnout there." I'm like, "Oh, do I? Yeah, maybe I do. Interesting." And just becoming more and more aware of what was going on for me. There were a lot of things that I was having to do that I just didn't want to do. Things weren't really seeming that fun. I'm working up here in the attic and it is great, but it's like another part of that, another angle of that re-epiphany was there's nothing that I can create or accomplish that will make feeling like crap worth it.

In the sense that even though I rationally understand that having a new office isn't going to make doing other work that I don't want to do more fun or more pleasant, I still think I was like holding out some hope that it would. Because I was like, wait, so now I'm in the office, in the new attic office, and I still don't want to do that. I'm like, well crap, I thought this attic was going to be the solution to everything.

And is it better? Oh my God, yes, so much. But it's not the attic that makes it so much better. It's the way I get to structure my day and live my life within the attic. It's like that re-epiphany, that re-remembering of there is nothing you can accomplish that's going to make you really happy. It is your brain that makes you happy. Right? There is no there. You've heard me talk about that before. There's no thing that you can accomplish or earn or receive or create that's going to be enough when your brain is in scarcity and in a negative way of thinking.

And so, in evaluating all of this, I started thinking like, well, what would my ideal day be like? What is it that I want for myself? And it was like I want to make sure that I have time to meditate. I want to make sure that I'm exercising because from mental health standpoint that really helps me a lot. I really want to make sure that I have time to read sometimes. It's just like I'm not asking for a lot. That was what my mindset was about it. And then I realized, again, like another re-epiphany, like guess what, no one's going to give you that. Literally there's not one person who's going to be like, "You know what, Katrina? You know what? I heard what you wanted, and here is the layout of your day with everything that you want." That has to come from me. No one else can create that life that I want except for me.

And so, I started doing those things that I know support me that I had let go by the wayside as I started overworking more. So, meditating again, just sitting and being with myself, doing some breathing exercises, doing forms of loving movement, taking my dog for a walk, just being with myself, taking that time for myself, doing some journaling, doing some thought work. It really has made such an incredible difference.

And so, what I want to talk about in terms of re epiphanies and weight loss is that this happens with your weight a lot even when you're in maintenance. So, what we tend to do is we figured out something out that works for us in terms of our weight or our eating. We're doing all these things to support ourselves. We feel like we're really feeling our emotions and processing things and doing all that thought work. And so, we're not relying on food to make ourselves feel better. And then for whatever reason, like a hundred million reasons, things just start to fade away, or you just stop doing this thing, or you take a couple days break and you think, yeah, I'm totally going to get back into it, and then you don't. And then before you know it, you're right back into some old habits.

Now, what I see a lot of people do is they get really judgmental of themselves when this happens. And they blame themselves. They make it mean that they knew they could never actually lose weight and keep it off forever. That something probably really is wrong with them. They make it mean all these negative things about themselves. What I want to offer to you is that when you recognize it, it can just be another re-epiphany, another remembering, re-remembering, another episode or opportunity for you to be able to recognize, you know what? Those things when I did those things or when I lived my life in this way, it really supported me, and these were all the amazing, positive of results.

And I've lost my way a little bit for any number of reasons. And I'd like to get back on that path again because I know how much better it makes my life. When I am not consumed with food chatter, when I'm not consumed with thoughts about my body and how things should be different, then I can just have some peace, and I can focus on things that are important to me in my life. I get to have an experience of my life that I want to have. And then you just get yourself back on track again.

So, similarly for me, I wasn't like, oh my God. See, I knew it. I will never be cured from this overworking problem. There's something wrong with me. I'm just like, oh, oh. Like another one of the big oh's. Understanding this concept on an even deeper level, feeling it deeper in my bones, really understanding the point of all of this is to have a day, day after day, that you enjoy at least some portion of it. That's for you taking good care of yourself. There is no goal that you'll accomplish that will feel so good that it'll make up for all the feeling like crap you had to do to get there. It's just not going to work.

And so, I want to offer to you that re-epiphanies, I think, are a normal part of the weight loss process. I think they're are a normal part of the weight maintenance process. And any time this happens, I want to encourage you, and honestly even challenge you, to not beat yourself up over it, to not be mean to yourself about it, to offer yourself peace and love and just that hug for yourself, like I've got you. Oh my gosh, yes. Okay, yeah, we knew this. We knew that this was so good for us. Let's get back into it again. Let's go and do that thing instead of spending a bunch of time dwelling on what we should have been doing, or what's wrong with us, or why this always happens to us.

I'm pretty sure this will not be the last time that the magnet pulls me into overworking. And when I say the magnet, I mean, me not being careful about what I'm doing, that really gradual slide. And if it happens again, okay, then I know what to do.

It's going to be okay. I'm going to be able to pull myself out of it. I'm going to be able to make the changes that I need to make to have the experience that I want to have. And that is available to you with your weight as well, always.

So, maybe this is an opportunity for you to have a re epiphany right now. Maybe by listening to this you realizing, you know what? Yeah, there are some things that I know would actually be really good for me and I've been forgetting about or putting off. I'm going to get started on those. Or maybe things are trucking along great and you're doing awesome. Just file this one away for when you find yourself doing some of those older habits. Maybe all of a sudden you're cruising the pantry at night before bed and you're like, what is this? I have not been doing this for a long time. It's totally okay. Interesting that that's happening. What am I doing that is creating a problem for me?

I know for myself when that suggestion starts coming up for me, my brain is like, oh, you should see about having a snack. I'm like, yeah, I'm probably not getting enough sleep. I'm going to bed too late. That's for sure what the problem is there. Right? But sometimes it can be easy to forget that. And all of a sudden you're like, why am I eating snacks before bed again? What is that all about? Allow yourself to have that re-epiphany and don't beat yourself up over it. Okay? It's just an opportunity to course correct, to get on that path again, and keep going toward whatever it is that you're wanting to create.

All right. I'll talk to you next time. Have a great one. Bye-bye.