



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hello there my friend. How are you today? I'm so glad to be here talking to you. I actually just finished a very long hike with my son. Actually, it wasn't that long. I felt like a long time. And like, it was five miles, five miles is not that ridiculous, but still a lot of up and down. It was really beautiful. My son is 15—15 and a half actually, and he is going on an Outward Bound course in just a couple of weeks.

I've talked about Outward Bound before on the podcast, and so, he has this trip coming up. They're going to be doing some rafting, and then they're going to be mountaineering as well. So hiking up in the mountains with, you know, big heavy backpacks and all of that. So, he had to break in or he has to break in his hiking boots, and so we've got to go hike. So, we took a backpack and filled it up with 40 pounds worth of water bottles and that's what he carried. I did not carry that, thankfully. Well, we had a really nice time getting out there, it was just a gorgeous, gorgeous morning. And we hiked in a like a state forest, a state park kind of place, so there was a really beautiful lake and I just, me and the forest I'm telling you it's something. I really, really, really- like, my dream in my life is to own land that has old-growth forest that I can just hike in by myself. Like I've never run into anybody else. It would just be my forest, someday, maybe. I can do that.

Anyway, it was really nice and now I'm excited to talk to you about some really exciting things like, why you think you can't lose weight? This is the second in that series on, why you think it's not possible for you? And you might be like, "no, I know it's possible," but deep down you think, "it's not possible." Which is why you still don't have the results.

All right, let's talk about it. Why you think you can't lose weight? I always love it because all the objections we have. Trust me, I've had them all and I fought them all and I love to be able to address them and just help you to see that they're just not true. So the one that we're talking about today is, thinking that you like food too much. So, like you can't really lose weight and keep it off because you just like food too much/ you'd have to give up too much, to be able to have the weight loss that you'd like or the, you know, have your body at the size and weight that you would prefer. So this is so, so, so, so, so common. I, for sure have had these thoughts many times in my life that I just kept thinking, "I just like food." This was before I realized that I was an emotional eater, which emotional eating is eating for any reason besides fuel for your body which I just did not think that's what it was. I'm like, "no, I don't do that at all." And then I found out that's what it was and I'm like, "Oh, yeah, totally. Sign me up for that identity."

I'm for sure I'm an emotional-." If you have to be hungry every time you eat to not be an emotional eater then, yeah, I'm not emotional eater. I definitely for emotional reasons. So anyway, I just kept thinking like, "I just like food." Food is fun. It's entertainment for me. I like to enjoy myself through food. I used to love watching the Food Network and watching different food related shows. I listen to podcasts. I loved to get cookbooks and look at all the beautiful pictures and try new things. And it just food was just a big part of my life. It was a big way that I enjoyed myself and had pleasure in my life. And so of course, when you start thinking that you need to stop enjoying food, or that you have to give up a bunch of things to have what you want, you're going to be resistant and reluctant to do that.

But, so what I want to help you to just consider here is that there's a big presupposition going on when you think that you like food too much or you'd have to give up too much to have what you want and that is that the way to get what you want is by giving up the food that you like to eat, right? That you think, that it's just a given, that if you want a certain body size or shape, it's going to require a lot of sacrifice. You're not going to like your food anymore and you're not going to be able to do things that you like to do, you know. And I get that, right? We're just like, "I don't want to stop enjoying food." I hear that a lot, like, "I don't want to not get enjoyment out of my food." That presupposes that not enjoying your food is what's required to lose weight and that's just not true at all. Just isn't true. I still enjoy my food. In fact, many years ago, I decided, "I'm just, I don't eat food that doesn't taste good to me." I only eat food I like. I don't care what it is. I'm just not going to make myself eat something for the sake of it being healthier because people say this is the latest trend, this is the thing you need to do. I just, I'm not up for that anymore. But what I used to think was that, like the way I enjoyed chocolate chip cookies was by eating a bunch of the dough as I was baking the cookies and then eating a bunch of the cookies afterward. Now what I do, is I just have that enjoyment in an appropriate amount. Meaning, maybe I have one spoonful of the dough and then maybe I eat one cookie and that truly is enough. I'm not at a place where I'm like, what I, what I really want to do is eat a whole lot more of the dough and the cookies, but I'm reigning myself in, I'm not allowing myself to have that. That's not what's happening. I genuinely have what I want and I enjoy it and I don't want more.

That is what we have to change, right? You think you like food too much, that's, I mean that just assumes that you can't continue to enjoy food and like food, while also losing weight permanently. Is your mind being blown right now? We really do think that those things come part and parcel, they just they're joined at the hip. Such a common narrative that we hear, basically, pretty much everybody talked about is that in order to lose weight, you'll essentially be miserable. And maybe they don't use those words but that's the way everybody talks about it. Like, if you're trying to lose weight it's sad because you don't get to do all the things that you want to do. You don't get to eat all things you want to eat.

But what I want to suggest to you, is the only reason that's a problem is because you're all, your calibration is off. You think that what's really fun is over eating all of those things and drinking more, then is probably best for you. So what we really need to do is just recalibrate the pleasure and enjoyment in your life. So part of that, is making sure that you eat food that you like. That you're not like, "oh I'm going to eat this healthy stuff," and that didn't scratch the edge. So, "now, I'm going to go and eat what I really wanted in the first place," and then that ends up being too much, right?

So we want to get to a place where, we eat what we like and we understand our body's signals. That means reconnecting to what your body is actually telling you. Does it need more food? Does it want this? Are you done? What if you could just have more anytime you wanted? Maybe you could just be done now. What would that be like? Just trying that out so you can recalibrate it, so that you're eating a normal amount of food for your size of body.

But then, there's a whole other aspect to this and that is learning to get more pleasure and enjoyment out of the rest of your life, out of the rest of your day. So what a lot of us do is we look forward to food and maybe alcohol all day long, right? "If I can just get through my day, then I get to have all the yummy stuff." Trust me. This was the story of my life for, well over a decade. I understand, okay? So, all day long you're just working, working, working and doing all these things that maybe you don't really like to do or like, "it's fine and it's good," but it's not really that enjoyable. The real enjoyment comes, at the end of the day, when you've hit that proverbial finish line and then you get to plop down and, you know, eat, have whatever it is that you want.

And so, what we have to do is figure out how, that our day is more pleasurable and enjoyable, most of the time. Obviously, you're going to have days that are harder, right? I mean, let's just be realistic. It's a human life. There's going to be days that are difficult. But, on a day-to-day, regular old day to day basis, if most of your days feel really hard, they're not that enjoyable, whether you're at work, whether you're at home, whether you're with family or not or whatever you're doing, we need to figure out a way for you to like your life more. When you're getting more pleasure and enjoyment out of your regular day-to-day life, you will not lean so heavily on food and alcohol to provide it for you anymore. And then, you won't be so reluctant to do the work that's required to lose weight permanently, right? If you're so worried about giving up too much, what that really means is it's like your little lovey, you know, like a little child's blankie. They're like, "don't take it away!" Like, that's what we're like with food and alcohol too, sometimes, right? Like, "no, I need this! This is the thing that gets me through!" If that's the relationship that you have with food and drink, like, of course, you're not going to want to give it up. But when you get to a place where you're like, "you know, I can have it or I cannot have it. It doesn't really matter because I can, I'm enjoying myself in all these other ways." Then, it's just so much easier to do this.

So, this can sometimes involve hobbies, enjoying yourself doing other things, whatever it is, that you know if you did more of it, you would like doing that. I think that's an important part of it, right? Having hobbies, just all the things that you like to do in your life, but that's only one piece of it. The biggest piece of it is, how you spend your regular day-to-day life, like, most of your waking hours. And so, a lot of those waking hours are going to be being at work. And for a lot of people, especially people have younger children, even older children too, I guess it doesn't really matter the age of the child. Sometimes, were spending a lot of time with our kids and, you know, as much as we want to be that person who loves every minute of it, we don't always. And so, if you're not really enjoying yourself at work and then coming home and being at home isn't that enjoyable, then that's difficult too. And I just do also want to speak to the fact, there are plenty of people out there who are like, "listen, I would love to have some kids that I could be annoyed with. I would love to have a relationship that I could be working on. And so, I just want to speak to all of it, no matter where you are in your life or what your situation is, your nonwork life can be very challenging as well. So, we want to spend time figuring out how much pleasure and enjoyment we get out of our regular day-to-day life, like, how we spend our time and work to improve that, to get more pleasure and enjoyment out of it. So how do you do that, right?

Often, we think, "well then, I'm going to have to leave my job. I'm just going to have to go somewhere else. Like, this place, it's not even going to be possible for me because the people I work with are jerks or whatever. The culture here is terrible. It's totally toxic environment," and that maybe. Maybe what you do need to do is find a different place to work, I have no problem with that, if that really is the best thing for you. But, I do want to remind you that what creates your experience of your life is not the people that you're with or the patients that you see or the cases that you do or who the administration is or who your boss is or any of that stuff.

Ultimately, it's your thoughts and your beliefs about your day that determine how you feel. So, whether you're experiencing pleasure, whether it's fun, whether you're enjoying yourself or not, it comes from the way that you think about it. It does not come from some outside source. So if you're like, "well, I need to find a job that's more fun," you're probably going to have a hard time because if your mindset is not one that creates fun for you, it probably won't really matter what you go and do, you know. Sometimes, we think, "well, I'll just have to leave medicine then." Well, you can do that if you want to. But guess what, your brain is going to follow you and you're still probably not going to have a lot of pleasure in your life. I just suggest that you figure out a way to enjoy yourself first before you leave. So that you know, that you're not having to run away and escape something. It's more a deliberate choice. It's a movement towards something, instead of a movement away from something.

So your thoughts and your beliefs about your day, right? That's your interpretation of it. Things happen. There are facts around you and your brain provides meaning. It synthesizes everything that's happened and decides what that means. Is this good or bad? Do we like this? Do we not like this? Is this fun? Is this not fun? And that determines how we feel. So, I'm taking you down this little path here, right? You think you like food too much because you are willing to let go of the thing that gives you the most pleasure and enjoyment in your life. So, the answer is to not keep eating all the food so you have pleasure and enjoyment. The answer is to eat the appropriate amount of food, getting the appropriate amount of pleasure and enjoyment out of that and then getting the rest of the pleasure and enjoyment you want to experience your life out of your day-to-day life. So that is figuring out how to think in a way that makes you enjoy yourself. That makes you feel pleasure.

And it's so easy for us to get into a state of mind or pattern of thinking or a mindset, where it's just like a filter in our brains and all we're seeing is the bad stuff, you know. It's like we're asking our brain to show us how this isn't fun, how I don't like this place, you know, how I wish I'd chosen something else in my life. And even if you like your job, even if you really, you know, feel like what you do makes a difference, do you get pleasure out of your day? And when you do, are you paying attention or you noticing? "This was really fun. That was a really cool case that I did." I'm going to spend just a couple more minutes with that enjoying the fact that I just did a really cool case or that someone just gave me some positive feedback or I really just enjoy that conversation with that patient. Instead of jumping right to the next thing, glossing over it and denying yourself the pleasure and enjoyment that exists in your day.

When you have more pleasure and enjoyment in your day, when you get home, you don't feel like you need food to come and rescue you. It's not your life raft, keeping you afloat. You don't have to spend your whole day going, "man, oh man. That glass of wine is going to taste really good when I get home today." Instead, you're enjoying your living in the present.

When we are thinking that our experience of our job is something that we need to escape, it's just like, you have to think about that. Like several decades of a career, spent trying to escape something, trying to get away from it, essentially, which is what we're doing when we're eating and drinking, afterwards. I mean, that, I just feel like that's a not a way that we would later on in life look back and be really happy, you know. We lived our life like- I'm so glad that I just, you know, really didn't liked most of my career, you know what I mean?

Like, can we just, before we decide if we want to make changes or do something different and get a different job, can we just spend some time on our minds figuring out, how to like, being in a situation even when it's challenging. That is available to you. It's always available to you. If this feels very hard and out of reach for you, it's only because of the habit, thinking that you've been thinking for as long as you have, okay? You've been thinking this way for a really long time, so the other way of thinking, any other way of thinking, seems out of touch, a pipe dream, ridiculous, Pollyanna thinking, you know, just not true and that's fine. This is what we do in coaching. So many times, people say, "How's your program any different than the podcast?" I'm like, "Oh my gosh. It is totally different." Because here, I introduce you to concepts and there we actually apply them, right? If you're like, "yeah, I need some help with this." Okay, "Here we go. Game one." This is when we dive in. And with coaching support, you can get help understanding what your responsibility is here. Like owning the parts that you're creating, which P.S. is all of them. And then, deciding if you want to approach it in a different way.

So here's the thing, I want to be clear. I'm not suggesting that you have to like everything all the time and nothing ever bothers you and your feathers never get ruffled, I'm not saying that. I'm just saying, that if you are not enjoying your day-to-day existence, there's something else that we have to do, right? Even if your kids are challenging, even if your relationships are difficult right now, there's always to get pleasure and enjoyment. One thing, I just use an example. One thing I started doing and I just have to admit, I'm, you know, I'm not an A++++ dog parent. From a love perspective, 100% I'll get an A+++, because I super duper love my dog.

But, we're not always super great about walking him and, you know in my defense, I live in Wisconsin, it gets really cold here and he is not a great walker. Like, I always kind of joke that our walks are much more like standing around with some walking in between because he's a terrier and he has to sniff everything all the time. And so, you know, sometimes it's just really, really uncomfortable. But the point is, that we've gotten the summer in a routine that he, of course, now expects because he's a dog, that after dinner we go on a walk. And it's just a short walk in the neighborhood, it's not a big deal. But I decided, "you know what? I think, what I need to do is not be listening to a podcast, not be talking to a friend at least most of the time, not be responding to Marco Polo's, or like, you know texting or anything like that."

Like, what I really need to be doing is just being present with myself out in the nature of my neighborhood, which does, you know, there's trees and flowers and things like that. It has been so nice for me. Like, I don't even want to give it up. It's a short, little bursts of pleasure and enjoyment for me. I have grown to appreciate what is available to me in terms of nature in my neighborhood, so much more than I ever dreamed was possible, just from getting out there for 20 minutes or so depends how sniffy he is. Sometimes it takes longer, you know. To just stop and look at people's flowers and look at, like, "Now, that's a really interesting tulip. I've never seen one like that." Or like the bark on trees, you might be like, rolling your eyes, groaning going, like, "she's lost it."

But I mean it, like, I'm looking at these, the bark, and I'm like, "That is so neat. Look how that one's different than that one. Look at the lichen and after it rains, it's a different color than when it's dry." And, you know, just really, really enjoying it. This is a way that I, you know, kind of take care of two things. Obviously, my dog likes being walked and smelling everything and I get to get out there and enjoy nature and enjoy being outside, getting fresh air, listening to the birds and all that. That's just a small way that you can increase the pleasure and enjoyment of your life.

So it can be things like, I mean. Another simple thing, like, say you're like responsible for doing the dishes and you're like, "I don't really like doing the dishes." Maybe you find a dish soap that you really like the scent. I know that seems silly but I'm telling you these are the pleasures of life. These are the things that we get to look forward to, that we get to enjoy. It's like, "why does a shower feel so good?" It's a natural pleasure. We get to enjoy becoming clean. The same thing can happen with everything that we do, if we decide we want to. So I'm not saying you have to do this with everything, I'm just saying that's available to you. There's probably areas in your life where you're not getting pleasure out of it or enjoyment out of it when that's totally available to you with some slight minor tweaks.

So I want to encourage you to think about it from like the standpoint of the low-hanging fruit. What is something that you already know you like a lot but you're just kind of like skipping it? Like, if I just listened to a podcast to try to walk and drag my dog along and don't let him sniff, I've done that before. FYI, it's not the same experience, it's not as much fun. You would think it doesn't make a difference. It does, it makes a big, big difference. So why is this important? This is important because you think you can't lose weight because you have to give up too much. You knew you like food too much. You don't have to give up the pleasure and enjoyment in your life. What you're doing is you're just saying, "Hey, I want this much pleasure and enjoyment on my life and I'm asking food and maybe alcohol to handle all of it." And what I'm suggesting is, you can have the same amount, maybe even more pleasure and enjoyment in your life and food can be some of it. But maybe, it would be really awesome to enjoy more of the other things. And that's where coaching comes in. I would love, love, love, love to help you more with that.

So remember, you create your experience of your life, okay? Your job, your family, who's around you, who's not around you, that's not creating your experience of your life. You are doing that all of the time with your brain and that's really great news because that means that nothing around you needs to change in order for you to have more pleasure and more enjoyment in your life. So important, okay? All right.

Well, thank you for your attention. Thank you for joining me today. I always love coming and talking with you, and I'm going to go back outside and enjoy the rest of this beautiful day.

I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.