



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hello there, my friend, how are you? Welcome back to the podcast. I'm so glad you're here and I get emails frequently from some of you who are really like, "Listening every week to this podcast is what gets me through." I really feel like we are friends when you say that. So, if that's you, I just want you to know I'm saying hello, we are connected. There's a heart connection through this medium and I'm so glad you're here.

If you're new today, then welcome. I'm so glad you're here. You're going to hear from just an amazing client, who I've been working with for quite some time and she's just a delight. We were both kind of like, "Why have you not been on the podcast before? How weird."

Okay, let me tell you about Mia Woodward MD. She is an amazing tenured professor of ophthalmology, so smart. Can I just tell you ... I've never told you this before. I can handle a lot of body parts but the eyeball and me just nope. Nopety, nope, nope, nope. I remember when we're learning ophthalmology, just being like, "Oh, yeah, this is not what I'm going to do." I think it's actually a great career and anyone who's into it, I'm like, "Go you. That's so great."

I don't know, it just ... the eyeball just kind of weirds me out. It's just a no so I'm so glad that there's amazing people like Mia and other ophthalmologists who are all in on the eyeball. It's so great. Anyway, Mia started in weight loss for doctors only, I think she said in January 2019 and it's been quite some time and she has been with us into masters and VIP which is a continuation of masters. She's made such incredible progress and honestly, losing weight and keeping it off has been just a very small corner of that. We often go into a thing like this is going to be the biggest, hardest thing and you solve that problem, and then you work through all the other things and we talked a lot about how she applied the tools that she learned from weight loss to other parts of her life and how she's just changed so many other areas of her life for the better. We barely scratched the surface on this conversation. There are plenty of other things that she's really worked on and made great progress with that we didn't even get to in this conversation, but I think we hit the highlights and it's going to be really interesting conversation for you. We're both Midwesterners, so if you like the Midwestern vibe, you've got it today. So anyway, you're going to really enjoy this conversation with Mia and so without further ado, here's my interview with Mia Woodward MD.

Katrina Ubell: Mia, thank you so much for coming on to the podcast.

Mia Woodward: Thank you, Katrina. I am so excited to be here.

Katrina Ubell: I'm so excited. We were just talking about how, it's just kind of a shock that we haven't had this conversation before for the podcast because you've been around for a while and you've had such major progress from being in the program, I can't wait to talk with you more about that today.

Mia Woodward: Yes, it has just been absolutely wonderful and me either, let's go.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. So I would love it, if you would introduce yourself, just kind of give our listeners just kind of a rough overview of who you are and what you do.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, so my name is Mia Woodward. I'm an ophthalmologist in academic medicine, and I am a tenured professor. So I do a split between ophthalmology and research. I do health services research and I'm a mom, and I'm married to a lovely husband with two kids, two boys who are in the rambunctious eight and six year old ages.

Katrina Ubell: Awesome. Amazing. Okay, so let's talk about ... I love hearing people's stories about like ... especially when it comes to overeating and that kind of stuff, weight loss. When did you first start struggling with that or when did you first start using food to feel better?

Mia Woodward: Well, I think I've always enjoyed food from a young age and I think that I had a pretty healthy relationship with food, but I also just never stopped when I was full, I would tend to just eat more, because it felt good to eat more, and I think that probably happened from when I was really young, and maybe in like junior high, high school, I would just have more than probably was enough for my body because it just tasted good, and I think in high school, and then even more in college, and then certainly in med school and residency, food and alcohol was a way to either more celebrate successes or just feel ... used food to like make myself feel better and it was just always a little extra. It was never in excess, excess, but always just a little extra to sort of make myself feel a little better. That's only really looking back. I don't even think I recognize that until I now reflect on that.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, totally. Just curious, were you raised with, "You should finish what's on your plate," and that kind of thing?

Mia Woodward: Yeah, clean plate club.

Katrina Ubell: Clean plate club. Yeah.

Mia Woodward: I was the girl who would like eat the bad stuff first so I could have the good stuff at the end, which is ... yeah, I was like, "Get it out of the way-"

Katrina Ubell: Eat those Brussels sprouts immediately because they're worse when they're cold. Let's get it down. Don't even argue.

Mia Woodward: Totally. Right, exactly. Get it over with because you're going to have to do it anyway. I mean, my parents weren't draconian about it. I mean, they were very easy going but the expectation was to finish ... certainly, if you wanted dessert, you needed to eat the healthy stuff.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, totally. The only reason I asked that is because I think for ... I think that's a really common scenario where, when you're expected to clean your plate, then you're consistently eating just a little bit extra, possibly, right or say, even you wanted seconds or something, and you got more like maybe half of what you got, as the seconds, would have been enough but because you're expected to eat everything you took, then you kind of ... it just becomes this like normal habit to just get a little bit overfull, and then that just seems like that amount of food is when you should stop, because you just don't know anything else and that's so much of what we do in weight loss for doctors only, right? It's like recalibrating that, what is actually normal? When are you supposed to stop? The reason why I think it's so important is because for many of us, like we're young, really young when we stop really listening.

Sometimes even as toddlers we're like encouraged to eat. So maybe we don't even have any long term memory of ever doing that. It's just important to recognize that. Of course, we have that problem, if that's what was encouraged.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, and honestly, I'm not even sure how much it was my parents because maybe I'm sure they said it to me when I was really little, and I internalized it, but I think it was also just sort of like school, there's so many forums where you get this message, especially maybe for our generation, I don't know. The messaging ... I'm in my mid 40s and the messaging back then was like, "You have to eat all your food pyramid," right? So, eat the healthy stuff before you eat the bad stuff. So, I actually don't even think ... my parents were certainly not food focused. No, but my mom was also an excellent cook and my dad was an excellent cook. So what they made was fantastic, and so I think I've gotten this habit of not noticing and it just being good and so then I wanted more, and then I was supposed to eat the good stuff.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Mia Woodward: I have a responsibility with a capital R. So I was like, I will eat this good stuff, so the food I have to eat because I want all the rest of this.

Katrina Ubell: Right, right, right.

Mia Woodward: I think I just gotten into a vicious cycle with it, frankly.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. Honestly, I think that responsibility is something that so many of us, as physicians, have as a strength, right? I know, it's like ... in the CliftonStrengths Finder, it's in my top five and for better or for worse, I can see all these ways it's helped me and I can see all these ways how it ended up creating problems for me in my life, just because I wasn't even aware, like you know what, you don't have to be responsible for all of these things or that actually isn't your responsibility, you just took it on because you decided to because you're so responsible. We were just talking this week on a coaching call where like ... I don't know, if you listened to that one but someone was like, "At third grade, I got the most conscientious award." I'm like, "Me too. I got the most conscientious award too." It's like we're a little subsection of the population with these very similar characteristics often, it's so funny.

Mia Woodward: It's so true. I mean, the perfectionism, the responsibility, the A plus, like gold star. Man, it runs through everything, right? It goes from your clean plate club, all the way to how I show up at work and getting my grants and doing X, Y, and Z. It's not that I don't love to do those things, but strength overused is a weakness, right? So then I just show up in this way that it's like, I have to be responsible for this and responsible for that and then all of a sudden, I'm not a responsibility.

Katrina Ubell: Right, you're like, "Why am I exhausted and burned out?"

Mia Woodward: Exactly.

Katrina Ubell: That's why. Yes, totally. So then heading into adulthood, kind of continuing similar patterns or what happened until you got to the point where you thought, "You know what, I think I need to try something."

Mia Woodward: Yeah, I mean, I think that ... Okay, so I've had healthier mindsets about like my body weight. I had this good friend of mine and I, that we would talk about how we were like avocado, we were like good fat, she would just like, "I'm just thinking myself like an avocado, I'm a little fat but I'm a good fat." There is good fat, so I had times in my life where I was focused on it and less focused on it but I think I, for a long time, knew that I was not aligned with how I wanted to be in my own body. I knew that sort of the me that was using food and having wine after a hard week at work, it was just not me. So, I would always lose weight in the summer when things were easier and more relaxed, and then I eat comfort food and gain it all back in the winter. I just didn't almost identify with who I was.

I was like, "Why do I always eat more than I want?" So I did the whole like ... I mean, my responsibility, I mean, I can be your girl and willpower too, right? I mean, I can crank up that willpower nut to like so high. So I did Weight Watchers. I lost 10 pounds using that and it was the points and the strictness. I mean, I was really proud of myself but it took effort and energy and it was actions, right? I was doing all these things, but I had a mindset of drive, drive, drive, as opposed to, it was not easy. It did not feel natural or comfortable, even though the food was fine, just like the act of sort of ... that intensity around it was just not great. So, I did that in residency, fellowship and then did it again when I got married for the wedding dress cliché, but it just felt hard and it was hard. It was very vigilant.

Katrina Ubell: I felt like it was kind of all consuming, it was always operating in the back of your mind, at least, like you couldn't really go out and do things very easily, even though they claim that you could. You're like, no-

Mia Woodward: I was always hungry. I always was hungry. I mean, honestly, the most awesome thing about finding your program is I got to eat avocado. I could eat my full fat self, right? I could eat full fats. So I could eat less but there were so much for me

Katrina Ubell: Satiating, right? You feel like, "Ah, I feel like my body is well taken care of," instead of this gnawing hunger all the time.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, yeah and it just didn't feel aligned when I was doing those things because it felt very forced. I was a big exerciser. I exercise every day of the week. So the exercise kept me from being like, I could eat more and then be at a weight that I was okay with and I think frankly, I just would dismiss it. I was like, "Well, fine. Everybody has a thing, like weight might be my thing." It was really finding your podcasts, that sort of had the aha, that I was like, "Wait a second, I'm eating because of my feelings." I was like, "What," because I really was. I was eating at the end of the day, because I was tired and eating more, because I was tired or upset or whatever, pick your emotion for the day and hustling all day long. I was just tired and then once I sort of identify it, I was like, "I'm eating because of my feelings. That's really strange." Immediately, just by sort of through your podcast, I was able to ... just by awareness.

Just by becoming aware that I am eating in reaction to a feeling. I was like, I'm in the pantry and I'm going to eat something, but I'm only eating it because I'm feeling. That's weird, I just dropped six pounds and I was like, "Whoa, that's getting close to my Weight Watchers weight and I'm just" because I am recognizing, I'm feeling something. I don't want to feel mind blown so that's really amazing. That's when I kind of knew that I was on to something, that I was like, "Oh, there's like a treasure trove in here that I knew ..." I was like, "If I can figure this out just from recognizing that I'm linking this action to a feeling or I'm using this food to manage a feeling, there is a lot more here to uncover." It felt like the tip of the iceberg.

Katrina Ubell: Right. It's like, yeah, X marks the spot, dig here, like "I think there's more." Yeah, yeah. I love that. I love that. So you started off in the program and it was not long after that, that your father passed away and that was unexpected. So that was like okay, you're like, "I'm here for weight loss," and then it's like boom, right into real life, which of course, I would never be glad that that happens to anybody but I'm always glad when life does happen, when we have people in the program because it's important that you learn these skills, not in this vacuum where nothing can touch you, because then when you go back into real life, you don't know how to live real life and work through this. So I would love to just hear a little bit more about how you work through that because I remember coaching you periodically through that time. It's obviously super hard but you really grew so much in your own personal work during that time.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, so I joined in January of 2019 and then, I actually just lost all my weight by ... Well, I didn't even think I had 20 pounds. I lost over 20 pounds, but I was in it to lose like 10 or 15 and I knew, I was like, it is about the food but I know because of this feeling thing, it's actually not about the food so what's going on? I trusted you. I mean, honestly, you had that podcast where you're like, "And I was that girl who the boots wouldn't fit in high school." I was like, "My boots didn't fit either," and I'm like, I'm crying over on a podcast on the way to clinic about boots not fitting in high school. I feel like she knows me. I'm not sure what's going on. So I joined in 2019 and then I really just recognized like, I just ... I mean your program was really just such a guide to see, "Oh, it isn't about the food. It's about what you're thinking and how you're just identifying and managing your emotions."

So the weight started to come off, which is of course very exciting and then you kind of kept harping on writing your thoughts and I was like, "Fine, Katrina, I'll do it. I don't really know." So I started journaling ... Yeah, I reluctantly journaled and then it went from the analogy that I like to give is, at first journaling felt weird and sort of like, I never floss when I was a kid so you start to floss and it feels weird.

Then you start flossing and you're like, "Oh, that feels kind of good," and PS, you stop getting cavities and your weight starts coming off even more than it did when you were not journaling. I call it morning pages. I don't know, it's like ... So I do my morning pages and then it was just like I was allowing my brain to get it all out. So, I started doing that in about March and I was like, "Oh, this is it. This is the thing."

I've been meditating for a couple years and so it tie it all together of like the intention and then, letting my brain divest of all the junk in there. It really did feel like flossing, like I was getting all the junk out of my teeth. So, the weight really fully came off in April or I got to a steady state, below what I was hoping to get off but I was like, "This is probably where I want to be and not any lower, a good place." Then, my dad had been sick from cancer and he was hospitalized, but you never quite see it coming because everyone is like, "Oh, yeah, it's just like a little thing and he'll recover," and he didn't. He died in the hospital unexpectedly and it was awful and heartbreaking, and we live in different cities and I couldn't make it there in time. My mom and my brother were calling me and I knew.

I knew it was that he would ... and I said to my mom and brother, I was like, "He will probably die before I get there, and that's okay. It's okay." Of course, it totally wasn't but it was going to be what it was. I spent the whole ride, journaling and yeah, I spent one week straight in the same hoodie, and I had friends that came out of the woodwork and just were so loving to me, but I had myself. I think, I also had a mechanism to process emotions, and I had also learned from you about clean versus dirty pain, and I knew this creep was a clean pain, and your journey of your losses in your life and I was like, "The only way through this is through, not avoid, not around, it's got to be through." So I just was like, I'm going to be super sad and I'm going to be super sad, and I'm still super sad. I'm getting choked up talking about it.

I feel still very connected to my dad, and we have some things going on with things he was connected to, that are changing right now and I'm deeply processing, like selling off something that he ... a place that he went to. I just, literally two weeks before, had gotten to the steady state and knew I was and I was like, "The last thing my dad would want is for me to lose this wisdom." So I actually use his grief to say, "I know, my dad and I know my relationship with him, and I know what he believed in. He believed in me." One of the things like, he would never want me to give up on myself and/or not learn what my own inner goddess was telling me. So I just leverage that knowledge to really dig into the grief and be really freaking sad and cry and feel uncomfortable crying because I'm not exactly a crier, except now I am kind of a crier, but it's a whole nother thing.

Katrina Ubell: It's a skill, right?

Mia Woodward: It's a skill. It's a skill and it's awesome. I mean, I was not a crier

Katrina Ubell: Very therapeutic when you're open to it. Yup.

Mia Woodward: Yeah. Also, right, crying wasn't scary anymore. I could just cry and I'm not an idiot for crying. I'm not a fool to cry, right? So I just was able to do that and it was really interesting too, because I had just lost all my weight, and so a bunch of people were like, "Oh, are you so skinny because your dad died?"

I'm like, "No, actually. I actually lost this weight and it's almost an honor to him that I've been able to not use food ..." That's how I framed it for myself. Listen, if you need to eat when you're in grief, fine. Whatever you need, you've got to do what you got to do to get through it. That is not a judgment but I was able to sort of pivot to a thought that was more like, this is a way for me to honor him which is being true to the feelings I'm feeling and not using food to buffer them.

Katrina Ubell: Which is so great and that's just as valid of a way of going through it, right, because so many people would be ... I remember when my daughter died, someone gave me a book and one of the things it was saying is like, different ways to take ... supposed like take good care of yourself, self care, whatever and one of the things was eat comfort food. This was well before I learned any coaching stuff or anything and even at the time, I remember thinking, "Oh, that's interesting." That seems kind of weird, not that there's anything wrong with you again. I think actually what my thought was, it's like, "Oh, that's what skinny, naturally thin people can do." People like me ... I mean, in my own defense, I had gained all this weight to have a baby and then the baby died so I was very much in like, I need to get this weight off kind of a thing because it was like such a physical reminder of what had happened, so that probably influenced it too but regardless, right?

It's just like ... such a part of the culture is just eat to feel better. It's okay to hit the pause button and then eat. It is but also you should be aware that that's what you're doing, rather than just thinking like, "Oh, this is how ... this is the best way to get through grief or this is just the way," rather than questioning that and going like, "What if it's not the way at all or it's not the right way for me?"

Mia Woodward: Well, I think what I totally relate to that story is that people can self-care tips and they're not built on a strong foundation, right? So people are like, "Oh, you're burned out. Meditate. Eat comfort food. Do this, do that. Get a spa treatment." It's like, if you're doing those things from, "I want to take care of myself, because I love myself," it's very different than, "I don't want to feel this or I'm in such a bad place and this will get me out of that bad place." As if the act of self care can get you out of the bad place, as opposed to taking care of yourself and then choosing to do self care things, right? Am I explaining that? It's like if you meditate, so you don't feel bad, that's very different than if you're like, "I want to take care of myself," and one of the ways I take care of myself is by meditating or eating comfort food or whatever. It's just a mindset.

Katrina Ubell: It's a different approach, right? If you think about any action, you're going to have thoughts and feelings that are driving it and it's like, what are those thoughts and feelings driving that action? So the action itself may or may not be useful, it all depends what is upstream of that and determine what it is and just like you said, it's just like that one size fits all kind of a thing. I mean, I feel like this ... what I do for years here now, with coaching, I'm just always questioning everything. I'm like, "I wonder why they say that?" In the image that they have, because it's actually like ... it was actually really a beautiful book and it was written in kind of like a cartoon format, it was illustrated but it was kind of written like it was a kid's movie ... book, I mean, but it really was so much ... so often children's books are actually more for the adults anyway. That's really what it was and of course, the image of the woman who's grieving, she's totally thin.

Of course, she should eat all the pie in front of her. She doesn't appear to have a food problem. So you work through that, not that you're like done, because as you're saying like ... I mean, I just look at my own grief as just, this is an ongoing thing that I'm open to feeling the rest of my life, like I think it's an integration into your life, rather than now I'm over it or I'm past that or it's resolved. I think that's possible for people but I think what's actually much more common is that it's just kind of comes in waves and certain things like selling off property or different anniversaries or things like that will kind of bring things back again. Well, let's touch on some of the other things that you worked on. I love like. you're all into the sparkle and the glitter of yourself, just because I can imagine someone is like, "Oh, she's probably got like glitter, eyeshadow on or something," and that is not you but I would love for you to just talk about that a little bit more.

It seems to be something that you really connect to, that keeps you connected to your own self worth ongoing. I'd love for you to show that.

Mia Woodward: I am a tomboy, girl, whatever. I never wear glitter clothing. It's unclear if I ever matched anything in my life. So the fact that I identify with the phrase that I sparkle is also kind of like self humor, because it's so not me. I mean, I played softball. I'm just like, never wore makeup. I literally think my first purchase of makeup was in college. I tried in high school, but it was such an epic fail. I'm like, "Maybe we should leave this to the professionals." Yeah, so I came through your ... Actually, that same summer, you talked a lot about being enough and really identifying with being a person who is enough and we can talk about professional career stuff too but being enough professionally has been ... as a mom and a spouse and all these things, like being enough is something that I was really working on a lot and always.

I mean, I always work. That's it, right? At the end of the day, if you can believe that you're enough then ... we probably never fully will but as I get closer and closer to believing that fully, it's just so powerful. So I was working a lot on that and my minister at church had this wonderful sermon that I actually listened back to several times, where he talked about how he accidentally put his daughter's new sparkly glitter tights in the wash with the whole family's clothing and it got glitter over everything and his analogy was ... so he went to his softball game with his glitter uniforms, like there was no time to de glitter. I don't know, it's a hilarious story and he's very good storyteller. He basically was like, this is like love and whether you are spiritual and you believe in God or you believe in a higher power, he's like you're literally covered in glitter all the time. You are enough. You are loved. You are whole. You are complete and you can't get the glitter off. I mean we know glitter.

Katrina Ubell: Yes.

Mia Woodward: You cannot get glitter off.

Katrina Ubell: I have some on my face this morning. I was like, "What is that? Where did it come from and why won't it get off?"

Mia Woodward: Exactly, those people who send glitter in cards, I don't know. It feels like a little passive aggressive, right? I'm like, what's up with those cards? I don't know about those people. So glitter, I was like, "Oh yeah, no glitter you can't get rid of." So this analogy of like, you just have glitter on you all the time and there's nothing you can do about it. I was like, "I sparkle. I truly just sparkle all the time and there's nothing I can do about it" and no matter what.

I'm just gonna keep glittery, sparkly forever. So even now talking to you about it, two years later, I'm just like, "I totally sparkle." Again, I'm not a glitter girl but I do, I guess I'm a glitter girl now and I totally sparkle. It's really just been a resonating centering place for me that when I'm ... all the time, even this week, like feeling like a fool or self doubt, or not perfect and all this stuff.

I can just like ... if I can pause and just take a breath and remember, I still sparkle and there's not ... like perfectly imperfect, right? There's nothing I can do about it. It's really just been a sounding like ... a way for me to remember that the glitters all over my body, there's nothing I can do about it.

Katrina Ubell: It's like this touchstone, you can always come back to that and remember that as the truth and I just love the visual of it, right? Just thinking about it, it's like, I know even my own daughter, sometimes it's like three months later, I'm like, "Why do you have glitter on your scalp. That was from ... I can recognize that glitter. That was from three months ago." You can't get it off and no matter what, it's just the truth about you. That's what I love about that is, it is that decision that you're enough and that you're as worthy as you could ever be. So creating that kind of framework for you, helps to remind yourself of that consistently. I love actually how you spoke about, professionally, that sense of enoughness. I was just wondering if you'd be willing to touch on this a little bit, just because, I mean, obviously you're a total baller.

I mean tenured professor, you do all this amazing research and you do all these things, and I'm like, "I don't know, how is that even possible?" I remember talking to you about just kind of some legacy things that you had as well. So I think your father was a doctor.

Mia Woodward: Katrina, it's like whole just

Katrina Ubell: Everybody, right? Okay, because like your grandfather, like you all are. Yeah.

Mia Woodward: Yes.

Katrina Ubell: They all had like positions of like, the head of this society and that organization. Really, there's a lot of ... how would we describe it, just really well-respected and majorly contributing members of medicine. So, I can only imagine that here, you are coming up in that and it's hard enough to be a doctor, and then kind of feeling like, "Oh, there's this certain level of respect that you need to obtain or people are going to expect something different out of you," and I would just love to hear your thoughts about that.

Mia Woodward: Yeah. Right. So the whole family of origin thing can either be your touchstone and foundation but then of course, you can also use it to beat yourself up, right? So yeah, both of my ... so my grandfather, like tons of academic research, nominated for a Nobel Prize, head of medicine at his institution, internal medicine. My other grandfather is CEO of a pharmaceutical company that we all know, that is like ... right and then it's not like my grandmother's are shrinking flowers, right? So one of my grandmothers, also a physician, did mission trips in Cambodia during the Vietnam War, because that's not a big deal. My other grandmother pharmacist, did underground stuff to get drugs in the Netherlands during the Nazi invasion and was like running from Nazis at times.

Yeah, and then these stories are just so powerful, but then they're also incredibly intimidating, so my dad's dad had us all signed contracts at three years old, that we're all going to become doctors.

I was the only one who like, what does that you do? No pressure. I mean, it was kind of funny but kind of not. Then, my dad is a physician and super well-respected in the community, an internist and really like a role model and it's like, my mom, again, like not a wilting flower. Now, a doctor. Good for her, just a corporate lawyer, a corporate litigator because like that's not a big surprise only, and my brother is super accomplished and I'm good at school. So I could get like all the As and into Ivy League, I went to Yale and then I went to Columbia for med school. So I was able to kind of do all those things. Then, I had a realization when I was in residency that I really loved academics and I loved doing research and I loved data and numbers and associations, and helping more than the patient in front of me, right? So stepping back and looking at the big picture to make policy and systems changes.

So that led to a career in academia and was really able to leverage my strengths and have wonderful mentorship and have a ton of failures that led to that successes because I was able to learn from those failures. Yeah, so I got these big NIH grants that you need to get to then get tenure and I have them now. So I'm on a ton of national committees and all this stuff. The whole time, I have mentees and I have colleagues who are like, "I don't know how you do this all." I'm like, "Well, I don't know if I'm as good as granddad and like ..." Meanwhile, granddad was not home, like taking care of the six and eight year old and like having an arguably, questionable ... either of them were really around, right? One internationally traveled and the other was just at the hospital, apparently his entire life.

I would still be like, "Well, I'm not them. I mean, I'm not them. I'm still not them." I was scared of shining. I like that book, *The Big Leap*. I'm listening to it now. I was scared of shining, and I certainly didn't want to outshine anyone else. I also was afraid of the pedestal and people are like, "Oh, I want to be you someday." I'm like, "Do you? I don't know. Do you think this is all to get ..." and even now, I have so many ... it's ridiculous, if you look, but those self doubts that you ... every person has because they forget that they sparkle.

Katrina Ubell: Right, and also, because they have a human brain, you know what I mean? They're going to be like, when I'm in a solid, grounded, sound place, this is what I know about myself and this is what I believe about myself. Then our brains just go back to like, "Yeah, but let's compare you to so and so."

Mia Woodward: Yeah. I mean, so my new urge work is around like emails, right and just not responding to the ding of emails and everything. I am in the middle of acquiring a grant with some people, and it's been really fascinating to sort of keep that grounding, while these things are flying back and forth, and the edits. I'm like, "Oh, I don't like how this is written. I'm not taking it personally," and being able to say, this is not about me and keeping grounding myself and keeping remembering that I don't have to respond to every ping and it's processing an urge, just like the urge to overeat, it's the urge to check that email and to be the person that is on top of it, because I realized, the last I checked that email and the first to reply and make sure they get their answer right away, and like click, click, click. I'm actually so much better for the project because it's almost like watching the Olympics water polo.

They're going crazy and there's this ball, and they're warring for the ball and if you're outside the pool, and then you're like, "Okay, I'll just take the ball and throw it in the net," because you can just step back from all the drama of the emails and what people say and you're like, "What's really our way to get this ball in the goal," because you're not in the middle of replying and responding and saying, "Oh, my God, he said that about me. Is that about me or is it about the grant?" It's just like no. I'm just going to like ... just opt out. Yeah and just say, "Well, okay. So I see that this isn't working," and I don't have to reply to the email. I just have to get to the underlying issue and me, replying to the email is just so they ... I hope they think better about me and it's not about the email.

It's about where we want to go. I mean, the amount of time that I have generated by just stopping ... I mean, to go back to your question, I still always have to unpack who I am in relation to others, whether there are others in my family, whether they're my work colleagues, where I say like, "Wow, she just got this big award or that grant." That comparison, it's just never ... I really resonated with that podcast you had with Rick Hanson about the decathlete and if you're going to be a decathlete, you just have to embrace the decathlete and just say, "Sure, like if I was all in on that, could I get the A plus and a triple plus?" Sure, but guess what, I'm probably getting an A plus anyway in the process of being a decathlete. It's okay.

Katrina Ubell: I think one of the biggest things is not then getting upset with yourself when you go back into comparison. I feel like some people are like, "Well, when am I going to stop comparing myself?" I'm like, "Well, I don't know." I don't want to say never but I don't want ... I mean, certainly I have no timeline for it but the only reason you'd ask that question is because you're not willing to feel and work through what comes up for you when you're comparing. So you can have that awareness of like, "Oh, I'm feeling really crummy. I wonder why that is? What's going on for me? Oh, I'm comparing myself to so and so and their accomplishment or their thing and I'm trying to make that mean something negative about me." Once I have awareness around it, then I have the opportunity to just go like, "Oh, Okay, it's just that thing again. I can just drop that. I'm just going to literally decide to stop thinking about that or stop thinking about it in that way."

That is how you move through it faster rather than going like, "When will my brain never offer me those thoughts again?" I think a better question is how can I work through that as efficiently as possible and not get myself stuck, entrenched in this muck that isn't helpful, that spins me out, how can I get myself out of that quickly and just keep moving forward with what I know to be the reason I'm here and what I'm doing and the purpose of why I'm even ... in the work framework, why am I even here? What am I actually doing? Then, I mean, I think one of the next best steps, what I try to then do is really cultivate like admiration for the person who had the success, right? Admiration and true happiness and joy for them. Feeling sometimes even like pride for them. If I can get there, I'm so proud of them that they did all that work to create that. That's so amazing, and not having to make that mean anything about me.

It has nothing to do with me anyway, right? It's like remembering that, and that feels so much better, right, for me, the way I interact with them. So that is all we have to do to get through it. We don't have to keep going like, "When will my brain stop?" Because I'm just not sure that human brains ever really do, especially if this is something that we've been doing for a long, long time. It's just this well worn pathway that's just easy for the brain ... the brain is like, "Oh, someone got something good. How does that mean that I suck?" There's this split second kind of association.

Mia Woodward: As if it wasn't available for you to also get that good thing in the way that you wanted it, right? So I totally agree, so that's my morning pages of like get all that junk out and then, I love the appreciation thing, so I have two work wives. We literally ... when one of us gets anything now, we literally jump up and down like schoolchildren. I mean, we're just like ... I mean when I got my big grant and then when my other friend got her big grant, we literally were screaming like high school, like prom, like crazy town people, to the point that our statistician came from another room, two of them and we're like, "What's going on with you guys? This is crazy." We're like, "We got a grant. We got a grant." You have to like so celebrate and it was like hers that we were kind of going for ... and it's so liberating to not ... I stopped competing with my colleagues at work because it's their wins just like ... it's rising tide of sailboats, right?

Honestly, I consciously chose to work where I work because the environment and culture there is one of collaboration, and one of teams. I knew that I thrived in teams from residency, I had this amazing residency class and we all work together and we just owned it, and we had a great class and by sharing my failures, by sharing my content, by sharing my resources, I've been able to do so much more. My grant is with two other collaborators and it's rising tide of sailboats, like you just do better work and even if another person does the next step that I was thinking to do, great, then I can move on to the step after that, as if there's the scarcity mentality is just like, let them win because then you can either celebrate and like you said, embrace the feeling of their win or make you win even more, like you have one lifetime. So, just let go of the idea that you need to do it all, what you do is enough, it truly is.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, what I love is, you're just such a great example of learning. You know the tools to stop overeating and what you need to do to have that relationship with yourself, to have peace and freedom around food and all of that, but then how you can take all of those same tools and skills and extrapolate them throughout your life. I think that's the thing that I think that when you're new to this work, it's hard to even put that ... it's almost like unbelievable. I'm not sure I would believe it if I were in their position. I'll be like, "What are they talking about?" This is that same example, you just glossed over it briefly but you're like, I took all that urge work and now I'm doing it with emails and it's the same thing, right? You have the urge to eat some food, you work yourself through that so that you're not feeling like the food is in control of you any more.

It's the same thing with anything else that you feel like is controlling you, whether it's emails or texting or social media or some kind of relationship or anything like that. So I always think of it as, you learn all these amazing life skills and tools, just through the framework of weight loss. So I'm like, "Yes, you will lose weight and that will be fun and great, but that's not even the best part," because then you can apply it to all these other areas of your life and you start to ... first of all, you get to see all the improvements but then you realize, "You know what, all those areas of my life are so much better too. Oh, shocker. It's so much easier to not overeat," right, because we were using that in the first place to try to get through all of that, so yes.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, I mean, I think definitely a huge aha when I was just like, "Wait a second, I already know how to do this. I just substitute the word food for time or eating for time, and I substitute the word like nuts for emails, and the actions are just ..." and all you have to do is build awareness of why am I checking my email, I didn't think I was going to check my email, and then you figure out the feeling that's driving that. Then, also create a protocol and a structure for yourself about What relationship do you want to have with time and with email.

So that's really what I've been working on a lot now is just sort of saying, my to do list is not ... Well, I mean, there's a lot of items on it but that doesn't mean that ... like the abundance of my time, and what I put into my calendar for the week is exactly what I choose to put into it. Yes, that means some things won't get chosen to put into it, sort of like, I choose to put these foods into my body and some things won't go in my body, but I can have a joy eat and/or I have something I enjoy on the weekends, and/or I can just have that food next week. I can just work on that research project. I just don't have time for it this week. I care about it but not as much as I care about other things and therefore, I'll do those things this week and that thing next week, and it's going to be okay. It's happening, when it should happen and if it really is something that I want to eat, I want to do, I will find the time and I will do it and that is great. Just sort of having that calmness wash over me of the parallels are just ... I mean, and I run the same thing with the kids and the relationship with the kids.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, it's all of it. It just like kind of keeps iterating itself, which I love because it's like, you don't have to keep learning new things. You're just applying ... figure out new ways to apply what you already know, which is like so much faster and easier and better, which I love. It's so good.

Mia Woodward: Well, I mean, I think that I really identify with like, I have this wisdom within me. I just didn't know how to access it because I think ... I hope most people have at least, even if it's 2%, where you're just like, I know, I know how to do this. Just that little thing that's like, I feel like I should know but there's just too much drama and blocky

Katrina Ubell: I do think a lot of people think that, especially I'm a doctor, I know what I should be doing. I'm just not doing it in terms of weight loss and things like that and then they feel a lot of shame, about the idea of needing help for that. I'm just like, "Listen, how would you know? I didn't know. You didn't know. None of us knew." Of course, it's okay to recognize, "You know what, I get it. I have it within me and I just need a little guidance to get on track and consistently keep showing up." I felt so often like, "Oh, this is just like that other thing that I already know how to do. Oh, that's cool. I thought this is a brand new thing for me. It's actually not. I totally do it over here in my work life. I just need to apply it to my relationship with food," or something like that.

Needing some assistance to get you where you want to be, there's no shame in that at all. It's actually ... In my mind, I'm like, no, it's smart to not sit around just spinning in the same circle of thinking you should do it, not doing it, then feeling bad about yourself. Then trying to shame yourself into doing it and not doing it and then feeling bad about yourself and just continuing around. You can just take the off ramp of that cycle of that roundabout and just actually solve the problem.

Mia Woodward: Well, and for me, I think that what's hard about signing up for a program is it feels like you're outsourcing and I was like, "I'm smart ..." Like you said like, "I'm smart enough to figure this out. I should know how to do this, but I hadn't been for my entire life or I'd been muscling it with an outsourced program." So when I was signing up for your program, I still was like, "Am I just outsourcing my problems and now Katrina is going to solve them for me?" Thank you, but then really through your podcast, but also by signing up, I was like, "No, I think she's just going to teach me how to solve my own problems, and I haven't been able to figure this out and I just need the bumper cars to show me the path and I need someone to clear the smoke out so I can just get the mist out of the way because there's a path and I know it's there.

I just can't it and it's just, someone needs to blow, help me blow ... not even blow the smoke but just like help me clear the brush so I can see the path that's already there because I knew at some level, that's it, right? You know what's inside of you but you also don't and so when you sign up for a coaching program, it sort of seems at some level like it's externalizing your problems but in truth, it's actually like ... at least the beauty of the life coach mechanism or a coaching mechanism is, hopefully, if you find the right coach that they can just show you how to do it yourself and then, it's a lifelong skill and that's what made the big difference. It was like, I wasn't outsourcing my power to you. You were teaching me how to use the power I already knew I had.

Katrina Ubell: Exactly. I think of it as, what I know I did for so long and what so many people do is have this idea of, I can't possibly be trusted to know what I'm supposed to do. Someone else knows better than me. They're the expert in what I should do and then when it didn't work, I've made ... that means something was wrong with me and instead I'm looking at like, "No, you are the expert in you. I'm the consultant. I'm the guy to help you to figure out what that is." Then that's why it's permanent, right? When you recognize that and you really know how to handle yourself, then you don't forget that part. You can continue doing that ongoing for your whole life, versus shoot, this expert knew what I was supposed to do and I was able to lose some weight, maybe that worked for a while.

Then life changed or my body changed or I became injured or something happened and now, that isn't working, now I'm back to square one where I don't know anything and now I've got to be on the hunt for a new expert who's going to know how to handle my body better than I do. It's just like a sustainable ... there's sustainability to it and it's also just the truth. You know better than anybody else, what is going to work for you, I just help you to figure out what that is.

Mia Woodward: Right?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, which I was.

Mia Woodward: It's so true.

Katrina Ubell: Because I don't know, I mean, how am I supposed to tell you what you're supposed to do?

Mia Woodward: Right, and since I come from this health services research background, a lot of it is about behavior changes and being able to ... so I guess my point is, everyone sees it through their own lens, right? So data, science, behavior change, associations. I'm like, "I see this is tapping into my self efficacy and this is tapping into my autonomy." So I was able to sort of use the work in the lens that I knew, for example, the real reason that I started writing the morning pages is because like you said, just start with five minutes a day. I was like, "Okay, five minutes divided by 24 hours in a day times 60 minutes is like point something percent of my day." That's just silly. I can find point ... I think it's 0.3% of my day to write. I'm not that time scarce, that I can't find that little of my day to do this one thing that might be the key to everything. So, I was able to sort of frame it in a way that I could hear my own wisdom.

That's a very small amount of time. Yeah, you can do this and so, using the tools but through your own lens makes them be more tangible to how your brain works anyway, right? I needed something like, "Oh yeah, this works like behavior change theory," and like blah, blah, blah and I could then extrapolate and believe even deeper, because I had already aligned with other beliefs I had. Does that make sense?

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Totally, totally. I think everybody has their own version of that, because you have it with that and then, I remember real specific things about how I gave advices to pediatrician or how I just worked as a pediatrician or things that I learned and figured out as a pediatrician, and just being like, "Oh, okay," which is totally not your experience at all, right? So it's like, I don't know, I just look at it like, we're intelligent people. We're obviously very accomplished. We can do things, really incredible things that most people can't. There's literally no reason you shouldn't be able to figure out how to stop overeating too. There's nothing that's so wrong with you or broken or whatever that you can't find a solution for that-

Mia Woodward: You don't need to find a solution that's rigid. It can be your ... like to your point, it can be your solution, however you've had success, that same pathway can create success in this domain too, right? So I was always like, "Oh my gosh, I'm academically accomplished and I've got this great family and I figured that out and et cetera." I was like, "But the food thing fail," and then I was like, "Oh, wait, I can use the same pathways. I created success over here in whatever form they took to then figure out this as well, that's amazing."

Katrina Ubell: Yes. I love that. It's so good. Okay, well, we could talk forever but one final question, if someone's listening and they're like, I don't know, I'm starting to consider, maybe I do want to try coaching to help with weight loss, like somebody were on the fence or just kind of considering coming into weight loss for doctors only. They were like, "Hey, can I ask you a couple questions," or whatever. What advice would you give them in their consideration?

Mia Woodward: I mean, I think the first thing is just to really try to trust yourself and it's hard, it's scary to trust yourself. I ask my husband several times like, "I'm thinking about joining this program," just like shots across the bow. He's like, "Okay, that's nice," and I was trying to sort of outsource my decision to him, as opposed to just saying, what if it's possible to trust myself on this one? Yes, it's a big leap but what if what I think is possible can actually happen? I think that's huge and I think just really like being honest with yourself about where you're at and coming at yourself from a place of non-judgment too, right? Just recognize the reasons that you're holding yourself back and just be okay with them, as opposed to judging why you're holding yourself back, right?

So if you are thinking about doing it or doing coaching in general and you're like, "Oh, I don't know" and you come up with all these obstacles. Those obstacles are the bouncer that are keeping you out of the cool kids club, right? Do you want to like present the fake ID and just get into the club or do you want to just let those bouncers keep kind of ruling your life and just saying, "No, no. You can't come in here." No, no. I know, you think you do but these are all the reasons you can, money, time, resources, what might so and so will think and how am I going to fit that in? Time scarcity, I think was a big one in my world. I was like, I can't even imagine how I would with all of that. I think I would just say, take a look at those without judgment and be like, "This is why I'm not doing this right now on either side, and that's okay or maybe that won't be so bad and I'll just figure it out."

So I think just identifying them without judgment, I think would be the biggest thing because we all have our different reasons for stopping ourselves from growing and our reasons are, because we don't like change the scary. I think it's the nervous butterflies thing, right? Whenever you have like fear and nervous butterflies, it's usually because you're about to do something awesome. So, when I feel nervous butterflies now, I'm like, "Oh, it's like, here we go. Let's go." So I think it's remembering that nervousness is really just a sign that you're stepping outside your comfort zone but you've got you and you'll be okay even if you do that. You can always go backwards and just like

Katrina Ubell: Exactly, you can always go back to overeating if you want to. It's all said and done. If that's really a better option for you. Yeah, I mean, I think even when I think about ... when I first was trying this out on my own, I was just like ... I mean, I don't even know what this is. I don't really know what I'm going to be doing. I don't know if this makes any sense, but there was still that kind of ... sort of connection to like, I think this is going to be good. I just think I need this. I don't know that I could have explained it in any other way because I didn't even know it was coming. How could I possibly know, right? So there's got to be some sort of resonance or connection there and this helps you to know like, I think this is the path I'm supposed to go down. Like you're saying, "I can't see it, there's brush all overgrown," but it seems like this person, this group of people is going to be able to help guide me down there.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, well and trusting that like on that path, like you'll know the first couple steps but maybe you're not even supposed to know the steps after that. Maybe the steps after that will come to you as you take like the mist ... it's always misty about six feet out, right? It's not misty right in front of you, so if you can take a couple steps, then you can see the next steps and the next steps and the path and then, all of a sudden you're all the way on this journey that you've been there all along. You just didn't have the clarity to see it nor should you because if you'd seen the whole thing, you'd be like, "Oh my god. I don't want to do all that."

Katrina Ubell: Or, you just be like done with it already, like you wouldn't even be having me. You wouldn't be listening to this podcast, right, if you already know how to do it all

Mia Woodward: Either you internally or life is protecting you from like the ... maybe that mist is there on purpose, so you just take a couple steps, then the next steps will come and I think this is a big step. It's just like I think that I'm connected. I think coaching is so powerful and if this is the next step for you, take those couple steps and then the pathway will clear out. You don't have to know the whole pathway before you go.

Katrina Ubell: I love that and I was just thinking about like, if we knew every experience that we would have throughout our whole entire medical training, would we have signed up? If it's like, okay and then this person is going to scream at you, then this terribly scary thing is going to happen. Then, all of this ... right, if we would be scared so, so badly, no one would become a doctor. It's okay for it to be ... like you said, almost like a need to know basis. What you need to work on now is these next two or three things and then, the path will open up for you when you're ready for it and just keep moving along so that ... not to say that going through this process necessarily is like equivalent to the strain of medical training, but just that same idea of like, you don't need to know every single thing ... I feel like sometimes people are like, "Well, I just ... for me to invest, I just need to know for sure it's going to work."

I'm like, "Oh, it's such an interesting way to think about it," because it just keeps you stuck where you are. It's like, I need to have certainty that this is going to work, except that the person has so much control over how well it works, right? It's almost like I want to ... I'm not going to buy this car, unless I know that it's going to be functional. That's very different, right because the car is not you. I'm like, no. The way you make sure you get what you want out of this program is by you showing up, asking questions, coming back again and again, even when you fail, even when it doesn't make sense, even when you are mad at me or whatever. You just keep coming back because you know you're going to make it to the other side and you have so much more control over that, I think then a lot of people recognize.

Mia Woodward: Yeah, well, I mean, you might get an MD at the end of medical school but that is not at all representative of the journey that you will go on, right? Lots of people get MDs in different things from different schools, but the pathway and who you are as a doctor and as a physician is very different than the road it takes to get to that day. So this is more a road and then the results, right, and the degree equivalent is really getting a deeper understanding about your relationship with food. So, I've been able to then leverage that relationship with food understanding too, intellectual freedom and relationship with time and like relationship with my profession and relationship with my family. So, this is different than getting the MD degree, that gets you that. This is like learning about yourself and getting freedom about your brain. That's the degree you're going to graduate with. It's like the brain degree, you will understand yourself. If nothing else, you will understand yourself at such a deeper level that you'll just be more aware and just living an intentional conscious life, that's the degree that you get, right? I mean, that's huge.

Katrina Ubell: Totally. I love it. I love it. Okay. I think we'll just end there because that's amazing. Mia, thank you so much for coming on the podcast and sharing all of your wisdom.

Mia Woodward: No. Thank you so much. I love being here. I love being in this space and just thanks for your time. It's just been absolutely wonderful.