



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hello there my friend. Welcome back to the podcast. I'm so glad you're here with me today. I have a really... a good one today. Something we really have not discussed on this podcast before, believe it or not. I think it's high time that we discuss it. I think that this is really going to resonate with a lot of people. So I'm excited to discuss it.

Before we do that though I want to share with you another book that I really enjoyed. Now, if you're just like, "What do you mean a book?" I have a book that's going to be published in September of 2022. In my experience with the publishing world, it takes a lot to get any book published and there's so much that goes into every book. This is one of those things that I kind of understood on a kind of conceptual level before, but now I really deeply understand it. Authors and books need all the help they can get. So I want to share with you just various books of all different kinds that I have thoroughly enjoyed myself, and that I am very happy to recommend. If it ends up helping an author, or helping them to get their message out, then I am all for it.

So this book is called, *We Are All Perfectly Fine*, it's written by Jillian Horton MD. The subtitle is, *A Memoir of Love, Medicine and Healing*. I heard about this book when I spoke at the Canadian women in medicine conference back in June. Several people were during my talk in the chat were talking about this book and Jillian Horton and how much they loved it. So I pick up because that's what I do, that's how I roll. People give recommendations, I'm all about it and I thoroughly enjoyed this book.

I've said before, I love a good memoir. I just love hearing people's stories. I love seeing what they make of those stories. Like what the learning is for them, what the teaching is for them, how they continue to develop and grow? I love being a part of that. So Jillian Horton is an internist who works in Canada, and she was also an Associate Dean in a medical school. She was really involved, just really... The way she described herself, just made me think of, she was totally that doctor that you were are like, "Oh my God, I love, love, love, love, love being with her." She was a great person for people, struggling students who are struggling to go and talk to her, she would help in any way she could. She was just really involved. Her patient population was also just very underprivileged and disenfranchised, and a lot of problems. She was just doing it, doing it and doing it.

Also, throw in a family, several children, the whole nine, and she found herself totally burned out. So the story within the memoir, basically she weaves in everything through the story of her going to a retreat in...

I want to say New York, that she went to for several days, four doctors who were burned out. She talks about just her experience there and the different people that she met, who are all doctors, and all the different things that had happened to them. She talks about why she became a doctor. She had a sister who had some severe health problems that started in childhood. I just love hearing people's stories.

She's just super talented as a writer. She actually had considered doing that as a profession then decided to become a doctor. People are just not simple creatures. I love the complexity. I just cannot tell you how much I love honesty and vulnerability, and people just saying it and writing it the way it was for them. Because I think so often we see so much of ourselves in that as well. One of the biggest problems that we have I think, is this idea that we're the only ones that struggle, that it's unique to us, that something's wrong with us because we think or struggle in the way that we do. Reading books like this just helps us to understand it's not just us. This is everybody's universal experience. It may show up in different ways. It may manifest itself in different ways in our lives, but we're all going through similar things.

What I also love is that she doesn't end the book like, "And then I was cured and now I never have a problem ever again." She's like, "Yeah, I'm a real person, who's really working on this stuff." She's continuing to do that. I tried looking her up on social media to see it was going out. She doesn't seem to have much of a present at all. So I don't even know if she'll hear about this. I don't know her, never met her, just bought the book and loved it. So if anyone knows her and wants to just let her know that I thought her book was great. I'd appreciate that because I think it really can be nice to get some positive feedback. Sometimes we just feel like we live in an echo chamber and we're just putting stuff out there, and we don't know. We're not getting that feedback, especially when it makes a positive difference.

I know for myself in so many different experiences in my life, "I've been like, I absolutely love this thing. I've told all these people I know about it, but do I actually write to the author, or the person who put on the course, or the people who own the store or whatever, to let them know that I had that great experience?" I typically don't. So I just thought this was a nice opportunity to maybe get the message to her. That I loved her book. I thought was great.

Okay, so are you ready? I'm going to really share how crazy I am. I am also very opinionated about the kind of paper that is in a book, the size of the font, the shape of the book. I have lot of opinions, maybe you've noticed. But anyway, how much do we love it when the cut edge... I don't even know how to describe this, but I'm going to try to. The cut edge of the paper, right? So you've got the spine on one side of the book and then on the other side, the long side, but the pages are cut when it's kind of like rough and cut sort of jaggedy. Oh my gosh. I love it. I know it sounds ridiculous, but I love it. This book is like that the paper feels good in your hands. It's just, yeah. My eyes are starting to go a little and I could still read it.

Do you know what I'm talking about? Sometimes you get a book and you're like, "Who was involved in this? The pages are Bible thin, there's more black on the page than white. It's just like, my eyes cannot see this. What is going on?" Anyway, it's a nicely put together book. What I also love is that the main colors are blue and she is kind of known for having a dyed blue streak in her hair. That's kind of her thing that is sort of her little way of rebelling, or just showing some personality, which I think is a ton of fun as well.

So anyway, *We Are All Perfectly Fine. A Memoir of Love, Medicine and Healing*, Jillian Horton MD is the author. I loved it. If you like a memoir, I strongly suggest that you pick this one up. I feel like all memoirs are quick reads, but I just, yeah I couldn't put it down. I stayed up late reading it, which says a lot. So please enjoy that book.

Okay. We're going to talk about rage eating. Have you ever rage eaten? I think of rage eating as... Well we could describe it two different ways. The first way is eating in response to feeling rage, right? So if we think about that thinking cycle that I've taught you before, you have thoughts, thoughts, create your feelings, feelings drive your actions. So if you're feeling rage that could drive the action of eating, usually we are eating because we don't want to feel that way anymore. Right? We're wanting to dampen the rage that we're feeling, we're wanting to neutralize it. We're eating or maybe drinking alcohol to just try to make it go away, right?

We're like, "Ooh, I don't like feeling that. And we're trying to make it go away." If that is what you're doing, then this is really not any different than processing any kind of emotion where we aren't willing to feel the emotion and we're eating and drinking, or drinking instead to try to make it go away. What we need to do is learn how to process that rage. For me personally, just having experimented with a lot of things, journaling my rage out usually is what's most cathartic. When I'm writing, I'm writing super fast and super messy and it's really not legible afterwards. So the point is not to go back and review things, or to gain necessarily any insight from it really the purpose of it is much more to just get it out. All the thoughts that are swimming around in my head and spinning around and creating so much rage, I need to get them out.

I'm also a rage crier. Crying can sometimes be hard for me. It's not something that often comes that easily for me. But when I'm really angry, I do often feel the need to cry. So when I'm able to get the rage to come up and get it out when I'm journaling, often tears will come as well. I find that whole pro to be really helpful in terms of me processing the rage and being able to move forward from it rather than continually feeling the rage. Because I've had that experience too, right? Then you eat or drink, try to make a go away or distract yourself with something. But then the rage is still there, you still haven't processed it. You're not able to move forward. So that is a great way of dealing with that at kind of rage eating, right? You're like "I'm eating in response to this rage that I'm feeling about something that's happened in my life. I would like to not be eating." Then what we need to do is process those emotions.

Another way that I like to process rage or anger is turning on angry music. Then just we could call it dancing, we could call it movement. I would probably call it more movement, but moving my body in ways that allow me to express physically the rage that I'm feeling. That's very, very helpful in terms of moving those emotions through. So that can be super helpful as well. Just think about if you... like boxing or something or like kickboxing, and you do workout like that and you've had a lot of rage. You will probably feel better because you've been able to move that rage through you through the punching. You don't necessarily have to do it in that way, although you can punch pillows or you're better your couch. You scream, scream into a pillow if you need to, so you don't alarm people. Just to move that emotion through your body and out.

So that's the first kind of rage eating. The one I want to dig into a little bit more deeply today is eating as a way of punishing yourself because of the rage that you feel toward yourself. So in the other kind of rage eating, we were talking about just feeling rage about something maybe that's happening in your life, versus this is more directed towards yourself. You're so enraged with yourself that you want to punish yourself or hurt yourself and you're eating in response to that. Sometimes that can be just eating in what we'd call maybe a more regular way, sometimes it can be bingeing. This is where maybe you recognize, "You know what? I'm full." But you feel like you deserve to be punished, so you eat more to the point of feeling uncomfortable or very uncomfortable, as a way of hurting yourself or punishing yourself.

Now I do just want to say that if you're in situation where you believe that you have an eating disorder, if you believe that you are really struggling with binge eating or bingeing and purging bulimia, anything like that, then you would definitely want to seek out some expert guidance on how to work through that. I'm speaking more today toward people who are not necessarily identifying as having a full on eating disorder, but are still using food as a way to hurt themselves or punish themselves.

I could envision someone listening and being like, "I've never done that before. Why would someone do that?" Or maybe someone listening and going, "You know what? I'm not sure if I do that?" So this would be a situation where if you feel like you've been bad, right? You've made bad decisions, you've done something that you think you shouldn't have done. Maybe you're seeing the consequences of those decisions now. You are punishing yourself by eating food. That's what I'm talking about. So in my mind, I think of this as a more extreme form of beating yourself up or burning yourself.

So if we take it even further some people might be cutting, or doing other self harm behavior. This can be a version of that. So again, I'm going to ask you to use your best judgment. If this feels like something that's out of control or you feel like it's worsening and you definitely are looking for some help, you're going to want to reach out to a qualified therapist who can help you, or maybe even just to your general practitioner who can help to guide you with what your next steps should be.

But for somebody who feels like no, it's not to that point, but I still do this, this is what I'm going to be able to offer to you today. In a situation like this, what we're doing is we are, we are punishing ourselves because we think we deserve it. When we think we deserve it, that's just the opposite of offering ourselves love and compassion. So I find this happens when someone holds themselves to a very high standard and when they're not able to reach it, then they think they deserve to be treated in this way. They often are very, very judgemental of themselves just in general. They find that the regular narrative in their head that speaks very negatively to them, maybe isn't enough, they don't feel. They feel like they need more punishment or they need to be whipped into shape better.

They don't know what else to do, so then they're just eating and eating and eating. They may have the awareness of like, "You know what? I don't even know I doing this. Like I don't even want to eat this. This doesn't even taste good." There's not pleasure being had from this kind of eating. It is truly as a way to punish yourself.

What I suggest in this case is that you completely drop the goal of losing weight until we've worked through this. Okay? Also, like I said, I suggest that you find some additional help because I do think it can be helpful and easier to work through this, when you have someone to guide you through. Whether it's a coach or a trained therapist.

But if you're working on this on your own, I don't want you spending any brain effort on trying to follow any kind of eating plan or any of that. That is truly just a distraction from what the real problem is. Right? A strict eating plan will not help you to overcome this. The thing that you have to recognize is that the way you think about yourself is what's creating this, right? You have very negative thoughts about yourself that then create the rage that you feel toward your self. Then in response to that, you want to hurt yourself further and then you take the actions of eating.

So that's created with your thoughts, and not because something is broken with you or there's something inherently wrong with you. I want to be clear about that, right? This is something that's created with your thinking and that's the best news ever. Because what that means is that if you decide you want to change it, that's available to you. So I suggest that you really move toward and focus all your energy on creating self-love and self compassion, offering yourself the benefit of the doubt, forgiving yourself for mistakes, the perceived mistakes, right? Maybe you did make some decisions that you regret now, maybe knowing what you know now, you never would've made those decisions, but beating yourself up now and punishing yourself either just by your negative thoughts, or by eating more food than your body needs is not going to help you to make better decisions in the future.

It certainly won't prevent you from making bad decisions in the future. If anything, it will just make you much more anxious about making decisions much more indecisive because you're so afraid of what the consequences will be if you make a "Bad decision" again, right? Because you know what will end up happening? You're basically, abusive to yourself when you perceive yourself as having made a bad decision, or the consequences of that decision being poor, then you know you're coming for yourself, if you make a bad decision. So of course you'd be terrified to make any decision moving forward, right? So losing weight and all of that, all that will come in due time when you have done this work first. Even if you just do this period, this is where your work should focus.

So when I talk about like, some people need to do some work on themselves first, before they're really ready to lose weight, this is one of those examples that I'm talking about. Where what you need to be doing is understanding what you really think about yourself and understanding what the consequences of that is. "When I think these thoughts, I feel this way and I tell, and to take these actions, it creates this result for me. If I do not like that result, then I can change that." The way of fixing that is not just putting myself on a strict diet. What I have to do is I have to change the way I think about myself. I have to decide that the way I'm thinking about myself and feeling about myself is not serving me, it has no upside is creating a lot of problems for me. I can decide to think differently.

Now you may be like, "Well, if I am living in self hatred and I'm moving to self-love, that feels like a really big bridge to gap." Or I should say "That feels like a very big gap to bridge." That may be the case for you. That's where coaching can really be so helpful. What we do all the time is talking about changing our beliefs.

How do we go from identifying what we currently think to thinking something new that creates a different result for us? What I will tell you though, is that going through the process of finding the next most believable thought that moves you closer to the way you want to think about yourself, and then practicing that deliberately and repetitively is what will get you there. I've seen this time and again, with clients who have been willing to do the work to change this. Usually they come from a place of like, "Everyone else has given up on me, I don't know what else to do. So I think I need to actually really do this." They create an amazing results for themselves, because they keep going with it.

So this is not one of those things where you can just try it two or three times and then expect it to stick. Especially if you've been thinking negatively about yourself and if your opinion of yourself has been poor and negative for a long time, or is very intensely negative. It's going to take a lot of practice, but it doesn't mean it's not possible. One of the is that I love to think about this is it doesn't mean that I never get mad at myself. I mean, it's okay to be sometimes, frustrated or mad at yourself, but I get over it quickly.

So, if you've been listening for a while, you know that I have a dog, I am a dog person. I love my dogs. My dogs are like another child to me. But here's the thing, so my first dog, she was a great dog. She did drive me crazy at times, but she's been dead now for several years. So I think my memory of her is like, "She was such a good girl." But my current dog, he is everything. He is amazing, and horrible, and disgusting, and so cute all at the same time, I won't get into the details of why, but I will tell you that sometimes he's so gross and he can be so frustrating. I'll just, be mad at him for a short time but I can't stay mad at him very long. He's just a dog, he's just doing what dogs do. Sometimes that's really annoying and really gross. I'm just able to get over it quickly because of the way that I think about it.

Now I could decide to just hate on him and think he's the worst forever, but I don't. I allow myself to feel the frustration and anger with him when he does the things that he does. Then I move past it quickly. Then I'm right back to just being like, "You're awesome. I love you even when you're gross." I just accept him for all of his characteristics. Similarly, to how he accepts me. Right? Sometimes he wants me to play with him or take him for a walk and I don't, and he probably doesn't love that. Right? But he still loves me and accepts me. Now, the reason why I bring this up is because many people find that the only example of unconditional love that they've ever experienced has been from a pet. I just want to point that out. So that may be the case for you as well. Sometimes we can say like, well, what would be like for like family member? But depending on your family of origin or whoever raised you, you may not have had really that experience.

So we can offer ourselves the same. I can do something and just be like, "What was that all about? I don't know, what was my deal?" I can allow myself that normal emotion. I don't have to never think that any I ever did was never a problem, but I can just allow myself to feel it, process it through, and move on. Like, okay, what's the next thing? I don't need to stay mad at myself? I don't need to punish myself. I don't need to think that I deserve something horrible or negative in my life because of the thing I did, or whatever outcome I'm not happy with. We want to move forward from it quickly, rather than staying entrenched in it and just building up our evidence for why something's wrong with us, we're not good enough, and we deserve to be punished for that.

So ultimately, when you're doing this work, what you're doing is you're moving toward yourself instead of against yourself. When you're eating as a way of punishing yourself because you're so enraged with yourself, you are pushing yourself away. You're saying "You're wrong and bad, and you deserve to be punished, and you deserve to feel uncomfortable. You deserve to be, spoken of really negatively." Which is a pushing away. When you allow yourself to move toward yourself with self-love and self compassion, you're trying to understand yourself better. You're trying to create an environment where you want to be with you. I just don't know any other way to have the freedom around food that we want, then to come up with a way to offer ourselves love, compassion, and disgrace, we're going to screw up. We're human beings. We're going to make mistakes. We're going to do dumb stuff. I do it all the time.

Am I going to make that a big deal or not? I used to make it a big deal because I had such perfectionistic standards for myself. I thought that doing something dumb, meant something bad about me. Now I'm just like, "Yeah, sometimes I do that onto the next thing." It's just not as big of a deal.. I don't have to make it as big of a deal as I might otherwise make it. So the rage eating part just falls away, you no longer need to do that when you're not thinking those thoughts that you need to beat yourself up and that food is the way to do it.

So I just really wanted to speak to this because I coach on this in the Weight Loss for Doctors Program, and it's a way that we can engage in self harm practices that's not often discussed. A lot of people aren't bringing into our awareness. So I'd be curious to know if you ever feel like you've done this before, if you do it on a regular basis, if you used to do it and you've gotten over it, what helped you with that? I just want to mention just one more time that if things are feeling out of control for you, if you feel like it's getting worse and worse, you're definitely going to want to seek out some professional help to help you with this because it is self harm, like any number of other ways of harming yourself. But I think that sometimes it's not quite to the point where we need to maybe get help in that way, we can often work through it on our own or with coaching support as well.

So that's what I've got for you today on rage eating, something that comes up from time to time.

All right, on that note, I hope you have a great rest of your week. Thank you so much for joining me, thank you for your attention.

I will talk to you next time. Take care.