



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hello there, my friend. How are you today? So glad you're here. Thanks for joining me. I'm really, really glad that you've taken the time to just take a few minutes for yourself to listen to something that could maybe change your life. You just never know. Have you ever had that experience? I totally have. I have totally listened to a podcast and within the first four minutes, I learned something that's like, "Oh, yeah. Life is never the same again after that. So good." Now, I cannot guarantee that that will be your experience today with this episode, but I'm just glad that you're taking the time to even just input positive, helpful information into your brain. It is one of the first steps, right? We have to actively do things to make sure that we're either getting onto the right track or staying on the right track, and you're doing that today, so pat on the back to you, a little high five.

Okay, I have another book to discuss with you. As you may or may not know, especially if you're new, you may not know, I've been just periodically on the podcast talking about books that I've really, really enjoyed reading that have made a difference to me in some way or that I just really liked. Part of the motivation for this sharing of books is because I am working on publishing a book as well. It'll be published next year in September '22 and I just have a really... My eyes have been opened, let's just say, to what it takes to get a book published and to get the information out in book form so that it even has any hope of transforming somebody's life or making any difference or even just entertaining someone. It doesn't have to change someone's life, necessarily. It's just so much. It's just so much, and so I just think that we should be sharing more about books and which books we've really loved. I love a good recommendation. I'm betting that you do, too.

Maybe you're not a reader and you don't care, but you know what? Sometimes I ebb and flow. Sometimes I'm more into like, "I'm going to watch the show." Sometimes I like documentaries and sometimes I'm just big into reading. Whenever I read, I am always glad. I'm never like, "Oh, well, that was a waste." But that's also because I've given myself permission to not finish a book if I don't really like it, or I don't think it's helping me, or I feel like I already got out of it what I would like to get out of it. I don't know about you, but there have been books that I've forced myself to read over the years where I'm like, "This probably should have been more like a pamphlet. I don't know that there was really enough in this to actually turn it into a book." It's like, "Wow, this is like really repetitive."

I used to think, "Well, no. You have to read the whole book, or you just stop and then keep telling yourself that you should go back and finish that book." Now, I just give myself permission.

If I feel like I've gotten out of it, what I wanted to get out of it, then I'm allowed to put it down, and so that just makes things move a lot more quickly. But I'm only sharing books with you that I've read all the way through, that I've really thoroughly enjoyed.

I'm really excited to tell you about this book today because here's a funny thing about this book: I have bought so many copies of this book that Amazon will no longer let me buy this book, okay? This is a thing. At a certain point, when you buy a certain thing in enough volume, Amazon is onto you. I'm guessing that they think that you're buying things at a discount from them and then probably trying to sell them on your own at full price. That's the only reason I can think of why they would stop letting you buy something. But the thing with this book is that I used to give it to every single one of my clients as a gift when they first started working with me, and so I just bought more and more and more and more of these books.

I love this book. It's absolutely one of my favorites. It's called Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance by Angela Duckworth. If you have not read this book, you have to read this book. When I first read it, we were actually on vacation, and I don't get super carsick, but I used to as a kid, so I'm just always careful, just aware. I know how to manage it, but reading in the car is generally not something that's a good idea for me. I was so into this book that I didn't even care, I was fully reading in the car, and I remember my husband being like, he was driving. I'm trying to give him directions, or, "Okay, the exit number is this," and then my nose is in this book again. I just absolutely loved it. Oh, my gosh, I've had everyone in my life read it, and I have, like I said, bought dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens and dozens of copies.

Let me tell you who Angela Duckworth is. She's actually a PhD psychologist, a research psychologist, and she does most of her work on grit. That's part of what people are calling the positive psychology movement, which is the study of how to make life better rather than the study of ways that people struggle or suffer with their mental health, and so this is a culmination of her research, at least up until a few years ago. I just love that she talks about her own family, too, and how you want to raise kids who are gritty and have grit, but then, can you push it too much? Where are the lines? She doesn't even necessarily claim to know what the answer is to that, but I just want it to be really, really interesting conversation/discussion of this concept.

I think for those of us who are high achievers, anyway, it's important for us to understand how we can use that natural internal drive to succeed to accomplish for the betterment of everyone involved, meaning we're not changing the world or helping other people or changing some sort of system at our own expense, right? We're accomplishing all these things, but at our own expense. We're the ones suffering. We want to figure out how everybody can win in the equation, including ourselves. How do we utilize what comes naturally for us where there may be some areas where we could become a bit grittier, and then how do we not turn into the kind of parent that's really driving their kid hard when maybe that's not necessary?

I know for myself, I will feel it in me when I start feeling that, "What is that feeling?" It's like this drive that I felt as a high schooler in particular to achieve, to accomplish, and now in hindsight, I can see that so much of that came from this feeling of lack or being less than in some way. And if I could just accomplish these things, then I would give myself permission to think positively about myself, but maybe only for a couple minutes or a couple of days, right?

I just want to make sure I'm not passing that along to my children or anybody else who I influence in any way, so whether you have kids or not, it's just a really interesting way of thinking about things.

Anyway, I've actually listened to interviews with her, Angela Duckworth. She just sounds amazing, just like this great person. I actually know somebody who studied with her and got a master's in positive psychology, and a couple years ago, I was like, "Oh, do you think that Angela Duckworth would come on my podcast as a guest?" This friend was like, "No, she's too busy for that," and I was like, "Oh, all right. Bummer." But I have kept her to myself, for some reason. I don't know why I haven't shared her work with you before. It's a great book, *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance*. I love a nonfiction book that reads really nicely where you are getting a lot out of it, but you're still being entertained. It's a nice combo of that and just a great book, a really good one. I highly, highly recommend it. Like I said, I've bought dozens and dozens and dozens. I mean, really, hundreds of copies of this book. That's how much I like it.

Okay, I want to talk to you about familiarity addiction today, which is a term that I think I coined. I wrote this down. I keep notes because I get ideas for podcasts all the time, so I mean, literally, is it is not uncommon that I have an idea when I'm driving and then at a stoplight I'm quickly typing it into my Notes app so I don't forget. I don't think I heard this term anywhere else, but I don't want to claim that it's mine because somebody else might have been already talking about this, but maybe several people had similar ideas, because I don't think I heard anybody talking about this. But I was thinking about how, why don't we just go ahead and lose weight and keep it off already? What's our deal, you know what I mean? What is the barrier? What are the obstacles? What is keeping us from just solving this weight issue once and for all? I was thinking about familiarity and I was thinking, "You know what? We're really like addicted to familiarity."

Now, I do want to just say that I looked up the definition of addiction and I was like, "Okay," so I don't mean addiction in the formal sense of the word when I talk about it here. I do just want to mention that here. I mean more like how people talk about like, "Well, I binge-watch this TV show," like we use "binge" sometimes in a way that doesn't necessarily actually mean bingeing, and I think with addiction, we sometimes use the word similarly: We're not really implying a true addiction, but just that idea that it's something that we're really drawn to, even if it's not in our best interests.

What it comes down to is this: What we really like is familiarity. We're addicted to feeling that that sense of familiarity, that what is happened to us is familiar, so what we think we want is something different from what we have, right? We think we want to not care about the donuts in the doctor's lounge. We think we want to not obsess about our next meal or constantly think about food all the time. We think we want to figure out a way to lose weight and keep it off forever. But what we really want is what's familiar, even if what's familiar is actually painful or creates a result that we don't want because here's what you get when you stay in familiarity: You get certainty. Even if you don't like the result, you're certain of what the result is. You know what's going to happen.

You don't want to eat at night, but if you're being 100% honest with yourself, every morning you promise yourself, "I'm not going to snack tonight," or, "I'm not going to have that third glass of wine," but if you're really being honest, you know you probably are.

You want to be the person who is totally like, "Yeah, I don't do that anymore. No big deal. No wine, no problem at all." But if you're really being honest with yourself, what are the odds you're probably still going to have that snack or have the extra cocktail? That's pretty high, right? We like that certainty. We know the food is there for us. We know that the alcohol is there for us, even if we don't like the end result, the long-term result of having eaten or drunk it. Drank it? Drunk it? That's one I struggle with. I'm sure someone out there is the grammar police and will let me know.

Okay, so we are also really wanting with familiarity the comfort that comes with it. Again, even if what we're creating is uncomfortable, there's still a comfort to the familiar. We know what it will be like, right? We know. I'm just thinking about a house that's really, really messy. There's some comfort in knowing what to expect when you walk in the door, even if you really wish it were different and you really, really, really find it uncomfortable that it is in that way, if every day you walked in the house you had no idea what it would look like, that would be more uncomfortable. There is comfort in that familiarity. There's a lot of comfort and predictability, right? You don't have to guess, "What will it be like?" You just know.

That's one reason why we're so drawn to food and alcohol. We know the food predictably will taste a certain way, especially with all the packaged things and stuff like that, it's just really consistent, or chain restaurants. One of the things they're trying to do is make it so that it's really consistent. Or even Starbucks. I remember reading something a long time ago about how they were going through their food selections and they wanted to make it so that it really didn't matter which Starbucks anywhere in the country, or maybe even the world, which one you frequented or went to, it was going to taste the same. There's this predictability, like I know I can go to Starbucks, and maybe it won't be the best cup of coffee, but I know exactly what it's going to taste like.

There's reliability in that, too. I can count on this. I can count on the food and alcohol to be there for me. I can count on my clothes fitting a certain way. I can count on the routine, even if I don't like the result of the routine, so there's no surprises in this. Many of us don't like surprises. We want to avoid change. Change feels hard. It feels difficult. There's things that are unknown in that and we'd rather just know what it's going to be like and not get what we want than do what it takes to get what we want. I think that's just how brains work. I mean, I'm no research psychologist like Angela Duckworth, but I will tell you that I think that this is what our brains do. We just like the familiar, even when there's discomfort in that.

Then what we do is we concoct stories. We start creating these little fiction tales in our brains to support our "habit," that familiarity addiction, right, our habit of just going back to the familiar, even if it doesn't give us the result that we want. We make up these stories to support that, so we start saying things like, "I just can't lose weight. I don't know. It's my age. It's the fact that I'm breastfeeding," or, "It's the fact that I have toddlers," or, "It's the fact that my kids are too busy. I don't have time to focus on that." There's always something if you have children, some stage or phase that they're in that makes it impossible, we can tell ourselves it makes it impossible.

We can tell ourselves stories like, "Diets don't work for me. I can look at everyone in my family and we all struggle with our weight. Genetically, I'm predisposed to this," "I don't have time. I mean, look at all my other responsibilities. I have too many other things going on," "I don't have enough support," this is a common one, like, "I need everybody in my life to be on board.

I need everybody to always say the right thing and never say anything that could make this more difficult, always anticipating exactly what I need, and because they don't do that, it's not possible for me to change."

Then we often get down to the old faithful beliefs of "Something's wrong with my body," or, "Something is wrong with me, right? That's why I have to stay in what's familiar," and so if we tell ourselves that we get you believe it, because a belief is just a thought that you've decided is true, and then you get to stay in what's familiar, even though ultimately you don't like the result. That way, you don't have to have the change. You don't have to have the surprises. You get to have that reliable, predictable, certain experience of your life.

But here's what's really cool about this: When you employ grit, which you can learn more about, like I said, I have no affiliation, no kickback on this book, it's just a great book, that's why I'm talking about it, but when you employ some grit and you decide, "No. You know what? I'm actually going to step out of that familiarity and I'm going to create some change for myself," the cool thing is is that you can make anything familiar, right? Right now, you're making what you don't want familiar. What if you created what you do want and you figured out how to maintain it, how to keep it, and then that became what's familiar and then you're addicted to that familiarity?

This is what this looks like, right? You go through the process of losing the weight, but of course, you have to do it in the way that I teach, which is you also have to look at the thoughts and feelings that are driving you to overeat in the first place, right? There's a lot of mind work that needs to be done there first in addition to, of course, looking at what foods you're consuming and how and why and all of that. But you go through that process, you create what you want, and you routinize it in the sense that it just becomes this thing that you do, it really becomes familiar.

If you've listened to any of the success stories that I've had from clients who've had success in my program in the past on this podcast, you will see that so many of them talk about like, "No, following my plan is so easy. I literally barely even think about it." It's so familiar to them now that it's just as easy for them to follow it as it is for them to not follow it, right? You create this scenario where doing the things that support you and not doing the things that don't support you become normal and familiar to you. They become predictable. They become reliable. You have certainty in yourself that you're going to follow this plan. You're going to do these things.

Then you get to like the results that you create, right? You're like, "Yeah, when I do all these things, I sleep better and my clothes are more comfortable and I have more energy. I'm able to move around more. My feet and my joints aren't hurting at the end of the day after standing all day long," just all these great things that happen when you're taking good care of yourself and living at a good weight for you, and then that becomes the new familiar addiction.

What we want to do is step out of that familiarity addiction, do the uncomfortable thing, and then once we create our results, make taking those actions, thinking the thoughts, feeling the feelings that create those results that we want become just the new normal.

We don't have to change any of it then, right? We always want to avoid change. Great. Create what you want and then don't change it. If it's working for you, then just keep going, and then you're like, "Yeah, this is what I'm familiar with.

This is what I know to be true and what works and I'm just going to stay doing this," so I don't think we have to constantly think about like, "We have to be uncomfortable all the time." I just don't think, I mean, at least for me, I'm like, "There's a lot of things that I'm uncomfortable about a lot and that's enough."

But sometimes, we're like, "Yeah, and I'm going to do some more here because I believe in the result that is to come on the other side of me going through this process," and that is worth it to me. It's worth it to me to figure out why food is the solution to my emotions and figure out how to actually process my emotions and feel them instead of stuffing them down or trying to avoid them. Once I have that skill, once I know how to do this, I can create what I want, and then I can just rinse and repeat and just keep it going, keep it going, keep it going, and that can be the new thing I'm familiar with.

It's like when I think about actually overeating every night, like I used to, like, "Ugh, absolutely not," but that was total familiarity addiction I was so afraid of running out of my Weight Watchers points, so afraid of being hungry after dinner if I had eaten everything that I would eat these massive salads because vegetables were free, didn't count for points on Weight Watchers, and so I just basically trained myself to overeat these massive salads in order to ensure that I might not have some hunger later. Now, of course, what's so silly is that's how big of a rule follower I am. The points police were not going to come and I wasn't going to get in trouble for eating some food if I was really hungry, but in my mind, this was logical and made sense, and so I trained myself to overeat and had other ramifications, like digestive issues, because I was overeating regularly, and then thinking that that level of over-fullness was normal, so that was very familiar to me, even though it gave me results I didn't like.

I've not done that in so many years now that it's a total new sense to familiarity in terms of connection with my body, what's the right amount of food, and stopping when I've had enough, and knowing that I always get to support my body with food or sleep or rest or movement or whatever it needs anytime it needs it. I don't have to be so strict and rigid with myself. We know how to get our A pluses, right? Then we take it too far. That's the issue there.

I want to encourage you to really think about the things that you would like to create in your life that you're not creating and understanding on a deeper level why you're not doing it. Then you can ask yourself, "Am I willing to step out of this familiarity to create familiarity with something that does give me the results that I want?" If you are interested in doing that, you will definitely want to check out the Weight Loss for Doctors Only program.

The program is so great, so fun. We're just changing lives, right and left. So great. Yeah, if you're a reader, you like reading books, go check out *Grit: The Power of Passion and Perseverance* by Angela Duckworth.

All right, friends, have a great rest of your week, and thanks for your attention today. I appreciate you and I appreciate just you taking the time to even listen to this and take this in and even consider it, even on any level.

Have a great day and I'll catch you next time. Bye-bye.