



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with *Katrina Ubell, MD* —

Katrina Ubell: Welcome, welcome, welcome, my friend. I am so glad you're here with me today. Are you ever in for a treat? Oh my gosh! I'm so excited about this conversation that you get to listen to today. So exciting. It's just so good. I know it's a little long, but I want you to listen, even if it takes you a couple commutes or a couple of days or chores or whatever to get through it. It's totally worth it. It's so good. My guest today, Elisa Boden, MD, she got off the weight loss hamster wheel and she's going to tell you all about how she did it. She's a gastroenterologist. She'll tell you much more about herself and her whole story. But she is just really just such a wonderful human. I mean, all the people that I work with are wonderful humans. They really, really are.

I just really love someone who just keeps showing up and keeps doing the work and keeps being open to diving deeper to really understand themselves better and understand what needs to happen in order to create what they want. Oh my gosh! Such amazing, amazing things happening in her life because she decided to join some random weight loss program that she heard about while she was in Brazil on the Amazon River. Not Amazon the company, Amazon the river. She's going to tell you all about it.

If that doesn't peak your interest, I don't know what will because it sure peaked mine. I was like, "What?" Anyway, please enjoy my conversation with Elisa Boden and I'll talk to you next week.

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

Elisa Boden: Great. It's so fun to be here with you.

Katrina Ubell: I'm so excited to have you here. We have weight loss success stories, clients from all different stages. What I always find so fun is to hear a little bit more of the longer term, because anybody can be like, "Yeah, I just lost 20 pounds in the last couple of months." But what happens when years go by? I think that this is going to be such a great example of how there's a lot of work to be done around the food and then there's so much more to dig into and so much progress to be made in other parts of our lives and you're such a great example of that. So I'm super excited for us to get going. What I would love for you to do is just introduce yourself, tell us a little bit about yourself, what you do so everybody knows you.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. So my name is Elisa Boden. I am a gastroenterologist in academic medicine. I live in Portland, Oregon. Actually, relatively new to Portland. We moved here about a year ago. I was just reflecting back that I've actually... This is the three year anniversary of my joining your program, so I am a long-termer. I've had this work for several years now and it's been such an amazing part of my life, so I'm so excited to talk to you about it.

Katrina Ubell: Amazing. It's fun from the coach perspective to see the layers of development and to see you through so many different things. So, okay. So let's start off. We always talk about your experience with food, weight loss, weight struggles. When did that all begin for you?

Elisa Boden: Yeah, I've been struggling with weight since I was a teenager. I first remember going on diets around the age of 13. I was a gymnast when I was a kid, so I was very fit, I had practices three or four times a week, was doing a lot of exercise. Around the age of 12 or 13, I started transitioning out of that and my body started changing and I gained quite a bit of weight during that adolescent period. I just remember being really unhappy with the way that my body was changing, starting to go on diets and being on and off diets then throughout my adolescence and teen years.

Then I went through a period where I just thought... because I had been through so many diets, so losing weight and gaining weight back, where I was just like, "Okay, maybe I'm just a person who is overweight." I think I took that on as part of my identity and stopped dieting for quite a while. Put on a little bit more weight every year as I went through college and medical training. There was a period around the time I got married where I dieted again and lost some weight, but then ended up putting it back on as I got through the whole wedding piece of it.

It wasn't until about three years ago when I started seeking out help and your podcast came up on my feed that I really pushed myself to get back into trying to lose weight. I had gained a lot of weight, a few pounds every year throughout all of this and then I had a period of time where I was doing in vitro fertilization when we were trying to get pregnant with my son. We came through all of that, I think my son was around four years old at the time, and I was like, "Okay, I'm done having children.

No more IVF. It's time for me to really get a grip on what was going on with my weight." I remember really vividly finding your podcast because... I was on vacation with my husband. My husband is from Brazil. We go there every couple of years. We had gone to visit his family and me and him had taken this side trip off to the Amazon. We're in the middle of the Amazon and here I am on this beautiful vacation and I'm thinking about how I have to get my weight under control.

I had started doing Weight Watchers and I had actually lost about 10 pounds at that time, but I was like, "I just know I'm going to put this back on. There must be some better solutions." Ended up in a PMG, a physician mom's group, subgroup on weight loss, and everybody was talking about your podcast and I was like, "Okay, I better listen to this. I have to figure this out. I want to be able to keep this weight off long-term." Started listening to your podcast.

I think it was right around the new year, so you had had some kind of losing weight for the last time webinar and I was like, "This is amazing. This is just what I need." I think I came back from the trip, and about a day later, I signed up for the program after probably binge listening to about, I don't know, 20 episodes of your podcast. That's how I came to you.

Katrina Ubell: Wow! Yeah. That's so fun. Sometimes it's so interesting how people make decisions. Some people are like, "Well, I went on a cross country road trip and by the end of it, I signed up." And other people take years sometimes and anytime in between. I think you might be the first person to discover me in the Brazilian Amazon though. I think that's really exciting.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. The internet was really interesting for listening to your podcast. I think it was interrupted multiple times. It was

Katrina Ubell: You persevered.

Elisa Boden: Yeah, one of those interesting things. Here I was on this vacation and I couldn't even enjoy it because I was still thinking about how unhappy I was with my weight and that aspect of my life.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I remember having those experiences too, and especially having some success with Weight Watchers and then thinking, "Well, how am I going to be on this trip?" And then doing the points thing, which felt so overwhelmed and so difficult. It felt so all or nothing to me, like either I had to micromanage everything and stress about it all and constantly... I mean, back in my day I had the actual paper, cardboard slider thing. Now they have an app, but before we had apps... Or just eat everything and gain the weight back and start over again when I got home never realizing there could be something in between that.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. I mean, for me it was just like, "I need to find a way to be able to sustain this. I can do this for a couple of months, I can do this for one vacation, but I just still don't want to be counting points for the rest of my life." And I

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Totally.

Elisa Boden: I didn't believe I would be able to keep the weight off. I think that was really it. It's like, okay, I'm going to go off this diet and it's going to be back to the same up and down. Your approach was such a breath of fresh air because it gave me hope that there was something I could do, there were changes that I could make that would be sustainable for me in the long-term.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I'm curious if being a gastroenterologist factored into any of this at all or just... I mean, not that you would necessarily be expected to be any different than any other person, but just curious if that factored in.

Elisa Boden: It's so funny because we always joke in GI. GI and nutrition is part of our boards, but we never learn anything about the nutrition piece or... I mean, even if we did go deep dive into the nutrition piece, I don't think what we learn in books is really applicable to how we live in the real world. I think about this a lot for my patients too because a lot of them we're prescribing specific diets for.

And it's like we tell you what to eat, but we don't give you the tools for how to actually change your behavior so that you can do it in a sustainable way. I mean, again, I think all of us as physicians, it's easy to tell our patients to do something, but I didn't have those tools to know how to create a framework for myself in which I could live in that way. That's what I learned from your program, was how to implement all of the advice I was handing out.

Katrina Ubell: Right. It's one thing to advise someone to make behavioral changes, it's another to give them the tools to be able to actually do that. It's not as simple as just do this other thing. If it were that simple, we wouldn't have so many people struggling in the way that they are. It's simple like that, but also as hard as that. It's not so simple to do that, especially on a day-to-day basis living a normal life.

Elisa Boden: Frustration for me in my life is I felt like I knew what I needed to do to lose the weight. When I went on Weight Watchers, it was fine, I could lose the weight. I ate less, according to my points I lost the weight, but I wasn't able to sustain that for the long-term. So it didn't end up being a good solution. So it is like that. It's like it's so easy to know what to do, it's so hard before you have the tools to be able to do it.

Katrina Ubell: Right. What I think is so easy, particularly for women, to do then is to make the inability to do it mean something negative about us as a human being, right? Like we're weak, we're worthless, we're undisciplined. Whatever our negative thoughts are about ourselves, that becomes the reason why we can't do the thing, rather than recognizing, no, there's just actual tools and skills that we haven't learned yet.

Elisa Boden: Right. I think the other thing for me was like, "I'm just not a person who can do that. I'm just genetically not a person... or in terms of my discipline not a person who can do that." And when you don't believe you can do something, you just give up.

Katrina Ubell: A lot harder to do it, right? Yeah. It's true. It's totally true. Totally true. Okay. Not surprisingly, because I think this is so common, you came into the Weight Loss For Doctors Only program and you're like, "Yeah, the thought work thing, I don't really know. Let's just lose some weight." Tell me a little bit more about that.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. Well, I had no idea it was a coaching program when I signed up. I didn't know what coaching was. I thought it was some woo-woo out there thing that people were doing. I just didn't know anything about it. I mean, I jumped in feet first with the food changes and basically was like, "I'm just going to follow whatever Katrina says. I'm going to do whatever she says. I'm going to be the best A plus student in this program and I'm going to lose the weight."

And I did. I mean, I really did jump full speed ahead in terms of making the changes that I needed to make with my foods and I started losing weight really, really quickly. I had lost maybe 10 pounds before I started and maybe 35 in the first six months, so a lot of weight and very, very, very quickly. But I think within a few months, I started seeing my old patterns pop up just in terms of my thoughts around food and feeling a lot of scarcity around food and when was I going to eat next and still being very obsessed with everything about food.

Really starting to use the tools that you provided in terms of thought work was so helpful at just being able to catch myself when I would fall into these old patterns. The old patterns looked something like, I planned for this today, instead, I went off plan and I ate a cookie. Now the world has ended and I should just give up. Diets don't work and this is why and I'm just going to go back to eating the way that I used to eat and being able to catch myself in that pattern of all or nothing thinking and recognizing that I wasn't going to be perfect throughout this. First of all, I'm not perfect at anything, but certainly wasn't going to be perfect throughout this and then having those tools to be able to support myself through those mini failures and recognize that I could just keep going, and that if I did just keep going, I would keep losing weight even when I wasn't perfect. Just getting those tools in place was so helpful in the beginning. Then I think obviously more as I went through your program, it was, well, figuring out why I felt like I needed to use food to comfort myself.

I think you've said this on your podcast a number of times. I didn't think I was someone who ate for emotional reasons, I just thought I liked food. I thought I had trouble stopping eating because I just really liked it. When I started recognizing that I was wanting to eat because I was wanting to not feel something in my life or because I was trying to... I think part of what I do with food is I use it as an escape. Like I had this crazy day at work and then I'm using food to get my mind out of there and just have some peace from all the things in my head.

Just being able to recognize that and to pause and say, "I'm asking food for something. Can I give that to myself in another way and not use the food for comfort?" There's all the little tools of how to manage urges and all of those things and then I think really there are the bigger picture tools, which are, what am I asking food for? How can I give it to myself in a different way? And how can I change my thought patterns so I don't feel like I need to escape all the time? That was a big one for me, is, why am I creating this environment for myself where I want?

Katrina Ubell: Right. Totally. Before we jump into that, I just want to point something out that jumped out for me from what you were saying, is this idea... Like you were saying, I'm not going to be perfect at this. And I just think whether we identify as being perfectionist or not, we are all striving for excellence. None of us is typically satisfied with mediocrity, I think we can agree.

So whatever language you want to use around it, what we put into that to create that is a lot of effort and hard work and toil and we just work and strive to get to that thing that we want. When it comes to permanent weight loss, that can actually harm you. It can make it harder and slower. What we have to learn to do is actually come to ourselves and add ourselves and approach ourselves with love and compassion and a softness that I think many of us maybe confused for weakness or we just aren't familiar with it at all.

It's just like something that seems completely foreign to us. And it really is. It's not just like, "Oh, I already know how to work hard over here. I can work hard on the weight loss." I know you can do that. You can count points like a champ. I can too, right? We know we can do that, but this deeper part requires a different approach to ourselves and a different energy.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. I think that that is something that I have really learned and been able to apply to other pieces in my life where I am also not perfect and allowing myself to not be perfect and not to make that mean that I don't try something or I don't learn something or get better at something.

Because I think especially in my life, I've definitely been a perfectionist to the point where I don't even want to try to do things sometimes that I think I might fail at. I honestly think that's why I just gave up on losing weight for such a long time because I was so disappointed in myself at failing at it. So just being able to have that skill of coming at myself with love and being like, "Okay, failure is part of this, is just going to be part this process." How I treat myself after I make a mistake or I don't do as well as I wanted to is the most important part of moving forward, because if I'm beating myself up like crazy, I'm not going to want to keep going.

Katrina Ubell: Totally. Totally, 100%. 100%. Or it just drives us back into looking for some relief or reprieve from that punishment that we're putting down on ourselves, and the way we do that is through food and then it just creates this whole cycle that is exhausting and unsustainable completely, completely. So you mentioned realizing, getting to this place of, why am I creating this experience of my life that's so intolerable that I need food to get a break from it? Let's dig into that, because your thoughts about your work, it's been fun to witness the whole progression. Talk about that a little bit.

Elisa Boden: I think like a lot of other female physicians, I put a lot of pressure on myself at work. I had an intense feeling of responsibility for my patients. I was worried that I might make a wrong clinical judgment on them and I spent a lot of time thinking about the decisions that I made and sometimes replaying them in my mind over and over and over again, pulling other people about things and just really having this hypervigilance for making sure I was doing well by my patients.

I also had a lot of problems with boundaries in certain ways. I think it was because of this fear that I might miss something on somebody. I never wanted to be unavailable for my patients. So I often gave people my cell phone number, the nurses knew that they could call me or page me or text me at any time to ask me things about my patients. I created this for myself, I think, out of this feeling that I needed to be always on guard for something bad that might happen to somebody because I thought that that would mean I was a bad doctor if something bad happened to somebody.

Or I think, moreover, I felt like it was my responsibility to take care of everything and to be there for every single thing for all of my patients. It really created for me a lot of overwhelm and also a lot of ways in which my work-life spilled over into my home life. So I would just take a lot of things home with me, take a lot of anxiety about my patients home with me, be answering calls at night, be double and triple checking my charts at night, and not able to really take that time off to be with my family.

And it's interesting. I mean, one of the things that I did about it well before starting your program is I went down to 50% FTE clinical activity because I wanted to reduce the amount of patient work that I had. But what was so interesting about it is it just kept spreading. I was seeing fewer patients, but that worry and care and... I call it hypervigilance for everything going on in my clinical life, just spread out into that other time that I had.

So it made things better, I changed the circumstance by seeing less patients, it made things a lot better for me, but it was always still there. I mean, this was a lot of the work that I was doing the second year that I was working with you and trying to make this overwhelm at work and this over-sense of responsibility at work less with my thoughts.

But I think I just didn't believe that it was possible. I truly believed that being a doctor meant that you were responsible for everybody who you were to taking care of.

That meant that my brain could never really rest. It all changed really for me because we decided to move last year and I had a six-month period where I was taking time off of work, where I was thinking about taking time off of work. It was in the middle of the pandemic and the kids were changing schools and I didn't whether they would be in person or not and so I just decided I'm just going to take a six-month break from work and this will allow me to realign my priorities at home and make sure everybody is settled.

At that same time, my previous job was asking me to still do some telemedicine for them because they hadn't replaced me and they needed a little bit of help. In my mind, this was like the biggest drama ever, was like, "Do I take this six months off and have peace from all the voices in my head and peace from all of this responsibility and truly have a break from medicine for the first time in my life? Or if I take on this extra responsibility doing telemedicine, I won't have this break and I won't have this freedom."

I got coaching on this from one of your amazing coaches, Emma. She was just really showing me that this idea of having to be responsible for everyone was a thought in my brain. She was like, "You could just choose to let that go whether or not you decide to take this job. It doesn't really matter whether you decide to take the job, you can choose to have freedom in your life and not have this overwhelming sense of responsibility." And I was like, "No, no, no, no. If I am taking care of patients, that is a huge responsibility. I will never be able to let that go."

What's so interesting is I did do some telemedicine, but I took like a good two-month chunk of time I'm off. What I recognized was that I was not taking care of patients, I had no patient responsibilities, and yet my brain just decided that it was going to be hypervigilant about all the other things in my life. I was so anxious about all the things around the house and around the move and around the kids and around school. I had just transferred all of this energy that I was spending on worrying about my patients being hypervigilant about my family.

Katrina Ubell: It was so fascinating. It's like, "Oh! It really isn't being a doctor."

Elisa Boden: I thought this was just like, I chose to be a doctor, it's like Hippocratic oath. I am

Katrina Ubell: Like this is just the truth that this is what it's like to be a doctor.

Elisa Boden: Then I realized that it was just me. I was creating all of that stuff. I was creating all of that fear and worry around my patients, and then when they were gone, it was like, who can I transfer it to?

Katrina Ubell: Right. There's certainly something that I can be worried about around me.

Elisa Boden: And just recognizing too that when I was in that state of feeling like I always needed to be watching for the danger in the world, that that was the feeling I was trying to escape from with food. Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. It sounds like it's like that hypervigilance was...

On a subconscious level, you believe that you needed to be hypervigilant to keep everybody safe, all the important people in your life safe, whether it's your patients or your family members or whatever, it's your job to keep everybody safe, which is like a primal, very deeply primal desire. So when you're feeling a lack of safety frequently and then trying to use the hypervigilance to feel better, which also feels bad, it's like it makes so much sense. Of course, how could you not eat? You know what I mean? And if it wasn't food, it would've been something else to just provide some sort of respite from that.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. I mean, it was so amazing to be able to have the tools to watch my brain during this period and to have the coaching to help me really see what was going on, because, yeah, I just didn't even recognize that at all before all of this happened.

Katrina Ubell: That's what's so powerful about coaching. We can do a lot of work on our own and sometimes it's like we just can't tell. They always say the fish doesn't know it's swimming in water. We need someone on the outside to just be like, "Hey, PS, this is what's really going on," for us to go like, "What? I have no idea."

Elisa Boden: You think this, I'm choosing this experience? I never, never would've thought that it was me choosing to feel that way. I mean, the great thing about it was, is before I started my new job, I had like four or five months where I really, really dug into this and figured out and just decided how I wanted to experience my new job. And it's been

Katrina Ubell: Which is fun, right? It's like a clean slate. You get to start over and train all the sports staff and everybody to work with you in a different way.

Elisa Boden: Exactly, and to show up as the human that I wanted to be, the doctor that I wanted to be, and also the example that I wanted to be, because I now have fellows and students and younger faculty who watch the way that I am and I get to model to them what it means to be a physician and to be a caring physician and to be a good physician who doesn't think about their patients all the time.

Katrina Ubell: Right. Right. I think that's one of the reasons that we struggle so much, is because we didn't have an example of that, like particularly female staff who were living a regular life feeling like they could share with us how they made it work. I think even if they... I don't know. At least in my experience, I'm sure they all had their struggles. But even if they had it really figured out, I didn't feel like there were any insights being passed down for better or for worse. There just wasn't communication about that and I love that you have the opportunity to do that now.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. One of the things I'm really deliberate about, is when I'm thinking something on purpose that's really helping me through my day... And I actually use something that you gave me, all of the time when I'm coming in the middle of the night to care for pay patients, where I really truly do believe and feel so excited that I get to come in and save somebody's life. I get to save somebody's life, that is so amazing. And to share that energy... And I say that out loud to the fellows.

I'm like, "How awesome is it that we to stop this person's bleeding in the middle of the night?" Because it's so easy to be so sorry for yourself that you're waking up in the night, I'm like, "These people are bugging me again. Can't they figure this out?" All these things that naturally come into your head, and then I'm like, "This is amazing. Look at what we get to do as physicians." It's totally different energy to come at it at because it makes you feel so good about what you're doing that you can catch up on sleep the next day. I mean

Katrina Ubell: Totally. And you can allow yourself to ride that high of, I just did something really awesome, which PS, was the whole point of becoming a doctor in the first place, right? Right? We think about, why did we even take the first step on this journey? It's to help people, and what a cool opportunity to be able to do it. It's also not like you're doing it wrong if you're not having that experience every single time, but it's so cool to be able to remember, "This is the point of all this," and share it with everybody.

You're doing your part to change the culture of medicine, which is so victimy in general. Things are happening to us and we have no control. That, in my opinion, just feels burnout so much more. So you're doing your part to influence your surroundings and that's only going to help them. We were just talking about this on a coaching call the last week or two, which is when you're a trainee and these attendings who are so many years ahead are sharing their thoughts about certain things you have to do, like getting up in the middle of the night to go do things, when they tell you, their thought is something very negative. It's very easy to just adopt that. You never even decided. So you are taking the opportunity to evaluate what you think and redecide and decide something that not only benefits you, but benefits other people as well.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. It's really changed everything about the way that I see work and I'm not feeling these days like I need to escape from it, which is amazing.

Katrina Ubell: That's incredible. That just makes my heart sing, because I think that's so... Oh gosh! It's heartbreaking. And I was one of these people too and I was in practice just really struggling. There's parts that are great and parts that really aren't great and being able to help you get to a place where it's so much better is just incredible. Okay, so that's so great. I want to take it to the next step because you've also become a coach and you now are working to incorporate coaching tools in the clinical work that you do. So I would just love it if you'd mention a little bit about that.

Elisa Boden: This is one of the other things that I have done that has changed my experience of work so much, is that I've really decided in a very deliberate way how I want to spend my time at work and I want to spend it doing things I feel really passionate about. I think earlier in my career, I chose pathways because I thought that they were the things that other people wanted me to do. Other people saw things in me and they were like, "You should be a basic researcher. You're so good at this."

That was the pathway that I saw to success in academic medicine and I followed that for a long time, but it wasn't exactly my passion. It was just easy to burn out in something that I didn't feel like I had chosen for myself. So coaching has been something that has changed my life in so many ways. It's funny because I talk about it with my husband. We talk about before Katrina and after Katrina. It's like BK and AK.

My life has so drastically changed and the way that I think about my life has so drastically changed just from being exposed to coaching, having coaching in my life and coaching tools, that I really felt compelled to become a coach because I wanted to show my patients really how they could use these tools to change the way that they experience their disease. As I said, I'm a gastroenterologist. I take care of patients who have inflammatory bowel disease. These are chronic diseases of the GI tract that result in inflammation.

These patients have a lot of pain, they have a lot of diarrhea, rectal bleeding, things that really impact their daily life, and they often need to be on chronic medications or require surgery. These are lifelong diseases with no cure. What I found myself doing after I was in your program for a little while is I would hear people talk to me about all the issues that they were having, the trouble that they were having taking their medications or staying on their diets or doing other things, and I was like, "If they only knew that this was their thoughts, then they could do something about it." But I wasn't quite ready to... I mean, I wasn't ready to start coaching people against their will and

Katrina Ubell: Right. Just like dropping that bomb on them in the clinic room.

Elisa Boden: Do you realize that you can stop being the victim here, you actually have some agency? But I just saw it as this great opportunity for myself and for my patients to really learn from this. So I did coach training during this six month time when I was off of work. And I actually created my own business. So I have my own business coaching women who have inflammatory bowel disease who are not my patients.

But I've been having such a good time doing it and really enjoying it and I feel like it could have such a great impact for all of my patients. I really truly feel like the role that everyone in the world needs, actually people who are dealing with chronic disease. So I'm working on creating a coaching program within my university and we're actually heading up and spearheading a big behavioral health medicine within GI at my institution, which has been supported by my chief and everybody there and I'm super excited about it.

I think bringing coaching into the clinic, I think, is the next wave in medicine and I'm hoping to study it so that we can really, really show how impactful it can be not only on people's perception of their autonomy within their disease of course, but really showing that it helps people to get better.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I mean, that's just incredible. The more that we can show, like actual research data, that that it works, the more funding there is, hopefully we can get financial coverage for it, and things like that, which is so... I mean, can you even imagine? Gosh! I just think back to when I was like, "I think there might be a few people who would be interested in this. It's just so fun. Yay!"

Elisa Boden: Yeah. I mean, I am so passionate about it, and again, I think this is something I'm so excited to bring to other people. But even just for myself and my own experience of work, having something that I feel so passionate about and that I truly believe is going to make such a big difference in my field is everything.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I love that and I love thinking about it even as... Not like a pressure-based kind of a thing, but just thinking about even what is your legacy going to be as a clinician, as a doctor? Obviously, every person you interact with, but even thinking about it from a bigger picture, creating this program, being able to change possibly at least the culture of how GI patients are treated at your institution. I mean, that's incredible, so exciting. So, so, so cool. I just love that.

Okay. I wanted to just do... because we've been talking here for a little while, but I just wanted to give you the opportunity to mention one thing that you had mentioned to me beforehand, was how there was one time where you were actually listening me coach another client about something that was going on and how that coaching actually significantly impacted another issue that you had going on in your life without even actually being coached on it. Would you be willing to share a little bit about that?

Elisa Boden: Yeah. I wanted to tell you about something in your program that had really impacted me that I didn't realize was possible, which is that when you were coaching somebody else on a topic that I didn't think related to me at all, it actually opened my eyes up to something that I was really missing in my life and it was a big aha moment for me. This was, I think, during my first six months of the program and you were coaching somebody, a woman, who had a child who had a pretty significant handicap.

She was having a really, really hard time and you were coaching her through the grief of the loss of the child that she had expected to have. You had made a recommendation for her to write a letter to this child that she had expected to have and to put everything in there about that expectation and then to say goodbye to that child so that she could say hello and bring into her life the child that she actually had.

Even though it didn't apply to me at all, I have a child who has no handicaps, but was just not exactly the child that I had expected. I thought throughout my life that I was going to have this child who was a miniature version of me, total people pleaser, total overachiever. I have a child who is super, super spirited and loud and boisterous and adventuresome and willing to be different from everybody else. It was really hard for me to accept that.

I spent a lot of time trying to change who that child was and it created a lot of struggle in our life. When I was able to realize that I was actually doing the same exact thing that you were coaching somebody else about without even really realizing it, I actually did the exercise where I wrote this letter to my child, my expected child, and I said goodbye to them. By doing that, it really, really allowed me to drop the reins on my child and to allow them to be this wonderful person who they are and to love them unconditionally and not try to make them into someone who I wanted them to be.

What was really interesting about the whole thing too is here I was wanting my child to be this people pleaser and overachiever and these are the exact same things I'm trying to distance myself from all of these stuff that happened to me in childhood because I was putting myself behind everybody else. It's allowed me to hopefully not create that same pattern for my child, which has been amazing.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I love that. Thank you for sharing that. I have had similar experiences where just what was being coached on had nothing to do with my life at all and I still had a major breakthrough. I just think it's so cool to hear about those stories because group coaching is so powerful that way. We often think, "Well, I need someone to be coaching me on all my stuff all the time." But sometimes we don't even know that we need coaching on that. We would never ask. Who knows if we would've ever even gotten there?

It's like by listening to someone else, you're able to be guided in this way that really makes a huge difference, which I just love. And I love that you were open to letting it come through, letting it absorb in. So great. Well, and I have to say, Elisa, it's been so fun being your coach and seeing you progress. Well, one of the things I love about you is I think your brain works somewhat similarly to mine where we've definitely had coaching sessions where I can tell where you're like, "I just don't know about this," but then it comes around later.

That's very much how I tend to be. I'm like, "I don't know." And I just love how you just keep showing up. You just keep showing up for yourself and you keep just doing the work even when it's hard, even when it feels like you're going around in circles. I think that's all a normal part of the process. Continuing to show up for yourself creates those amazing results that we want, which is exactly everything you just shared. So, just good for you. I'm so happy for you.

Elisa Boden: One of the things that you have really taught me is that if I just keep showing up and I'm not so anxious about getting there, getting somewhere else, getting to the goal weight, getting to whatever that next goal is, if I just show up for myself every day and love myself through the process, then I just end up there. It's—

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. I love it. I love it. Life keeps throwing challenges our way and then the process continues. We believe in the illusion of the "there", the place where all the birds sing all the time, there's never a problem. We only set ourselves up for this disappointment when we can continue to lead a very human life where there are struggles and new challenges and stressors and other things that come up.

Changing that idea, I think, makes such a difference. It doesn't necessarily make it a lot easier in the short-term, but in the long-term, it really does because you can stop letting go of this idea of some utopia somewhere that you just haven't... You just have to figure out how to get there, and once you do, that's going to be it.

Elisa Boden: Yeah. I love just being able to love the process of every day.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. Amazing. Amazing. Well, Elisa, if somebody were like you on the Amazon in Brazil, happens to come across this podcast and were considering life coaching, weight loss for doctors only, what would you tell them?

Elisa Boden: I mean, I can honestly say this was the best investment of my money and time of any investment I have ever made, including medical training. This changed my life in a way that I would've never expected and I'm so, so grateful for. So it is without a doubt such a great investment.

Don't think about it, just do it. I mean, the other thing is just having the community of women physicians that I have met within your group has been so important in my life. Having people who I really truly feel I can feel vulnerable with, who share a lot of the same struggles with me, who I just relate to on this other plane has been amazing. So it shouldn't even be a question, do it. You'll have your before Katrina and after Katrina moment.

Katrina Ubell: Oh, that's so exciting. Well, thank you so much for saying all those amazing things and thank you so much for coming out and sharing. I know this was your dare for yourself to get yourself to come and do it. I thought it was just such a great conversation. So thanks so much for letting all our listeners listen in.

Elisa Boden: Thank you again, Katrina. Thank you so much.