



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS — with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Hello there my friend, we are marching closer to 300 episodes, I cannot believe it. These episodes lately have felt like a mouthful getting like 288, like out of my mouth. It's a lot. It's a lot. And I'm so glad to be here. I still haven't run out of things to talk to you about. Can you believe it? So many good things, I've got a great episode for you today.

I wanted to give you a little update though. You may recall that a little while ago, I told you about the Canadian Women in Medicine Conference that was in Victoria, Canada, that I went to and I invited you to come, but it was kind of last minute. I know that many of you signed up for the virtual option. So, I hope that you really enjoyed that.

I'm not Canadian, I just really think that this is an amazing conference and I just wanted to tell you how it went. I had such a fun time. Luckily, all my flights and everything were super smooth, so that always helps a lot. And it was such a beautiful, beautiful area, beautiful location, beautiful hotel. And I just met some of the loveliest people.

So, if I met you there, hello, little shout out to you. I had so much fun meeting listeners, meeting current clients, former clients, and of course, getting to meet some new people as well. And I learned so many things.

There were such great talks, like I cannot even tell you. It was just fabulous. I really learned so much and I had kind of gone into it thinking like, "Well, I'll see, maybe I'll just go to some of the talks." I was like, "I got to go, you guys. Like I want to listen to this one." They were all so good, and it was so fun, just so fun.

So, next year, it's actually going to be in May and it's in Montreal, which is awesome because I have not ever been to Montreal. And I want to go because I don't think I've really told you, but I've been learning French on Duolingo, and I want to go practice my French. We'll see if they can actually understand me.

But anyway, if you want to just mark your calendar for the future, just to kind of hold that weekend, in case you're interested in going. Of course, Americans are invited as well. It's going to be May 19th through the 21st, 2023 in Montreal.

So, I know I put it on my calendar just to have that kind of marked as we start moving into the new year and making new plans for different things. So, if you want to come and join — like I said, I don't get anything out of it. Like there's no reason for me to support this. I'm not a part of it, at least so far. I did speak at it two years ago, but I just think it's a great conference, and it's just really positive and upbeat.

And it was just a lot of fun and I really enjoyed it. And so, just big shout out to the organizers too. They do such a good job. I'm telling you, this is like legit, this conference. It's really incredible. So, they do a great job and I just want to give them another little pat on the back. I already told them in person, but just a little public recognition is always so nice.

Listen, did you download the new free tool that I have for you? I told you about it in the last week's episode. In case you missed that one, haven't gotten to it yet, or you're just new today to the podcast, then welcome.

It's called the Overeating First Aid Kit, and you are going to want to download this. So, what it is, is a private podcast, will give you all the instructions on how to get yourself logged in, it's super simple; so that you have these three audio recordings that I created just for you on your phone, in your regular podcast app, available to you all the time.

So, anytime you need to listen to it, it's right at the ready. It's not like you need to go into like some Dropbox folder and like download the thing or whatever, something complicated. Or like if your phone, if the screen shuts off, the audio ends. It's just like listening to a podcast, so easy, so good. And it has three audios in there that you can use for different things.

So, the first is to help you stop stress eating. The second is to help you to stop nighttime eating. And the third is to help you to process the desire to eat or drink.

So, these are audios that you're going to listen to. You're going to have my voice leading you through the process of doing this so that you actually see what it's like to want to eat and then process what's going on for you, and then not eat.

I recognize that this was something that people were not understanding. I'm like, "Listen, I can help you with this." And so, I wanted to actually give you a little bit of feedback from someone who listened and tried it out, just like a little testimonial about how it goes.

So, here's what she wrote. She said, "I did the nighttime meditation last night and it was so interesting. I felt resistance to doing it because I just really wanted a treat before getting ready for bed. The desire was strong enough that I assumed I'd still want the treat even after doing the meditation. So, I almost didn't do it."

She actually says, "So, I almost didn't even do it." I mean, have we all been there? We're like, "It's not even going to work, so why bother?" But she did do it. She said, "I ranked my desire at a seven to start, and then a five at the end. I found that by the time I was done, I did still want the treat, but it didn't feel so desperate. Just that slight lowering of the desire was enough for me to be okay not having it."

I thought that was so, so powerful. Like sometimes we're like, it needs to be this massive change or transformation for it to be worthwhile. I mean, she spent six minutes and went from like, "No, I am desperate to have this" to, "I can be okay. And I can just go to bed." This is so, so, so, so, so important. Especially when it comes to us believing that there's no other way for us. Like I'm just the kind of person who when I want to eat, I just have to ... or it's very, very hard for me to stop. Like not true. And I'm going to lead you through the process.

And what's so cool is that if you do this enough times, you're going to start to build up the skill of being able to do this yourself. So, at first, you're hearing my voice, and eventually, it will become your voice. It will really truly be how you approach yourself when you have this desire crop up.

Super-duper good, you're going to want this right away. Like I said, to download it, to get it right now for free, go to katrinaubellmd.com/kit.

So, let's talk about de-stressing without food. I think this is actually a perfect tie in to the Overeating First Aid Kit.

So, when we talk about stress, we also talk about de-stressing like, we need to work through the stress that we accumulate in our bodies throughout the day. And that can be from all the different experiences that we have. The thoughts that we have end up creating the stress for ourselves, and we have to figure out what to do.

Because for so many of us, we're like, "Yeah, yeah, I'm all about de stressing. But if it's not with a glass of wine or a cocktail or a beer, or chips or cookies or ice cream, like I don't know what else to do. Like I literally have no idea what else one would do to de-stress." So, how do we focus on this?

And so, I have two areas that I want to suggest that you work on in terms of de-stressing without food. Now, the first is in feeling your emotions. Because what's happening when we're feeling stress is we're like, "I don't want to feel stress, so I want to avoid that and I'm going to eat."

Now, oftentimes, we're like eating or we're drinking while also doing something else to try to numb ourselves out. We're watching a show, we're on social media. We're just like trying to just feel numb to the stress. We just don't want to feel it, we want it to go away and the food or the alcohol can be a part of that.

And what I want to suggest that you do is to instead, connect to what's actually going on for you. Now, I do want to say that when you're first learning how to do this, you may still eat the food later. And if you do, that's okay. Same with the overeating first aid kit. If you can get things to settle down a little bit and you still decide to eat, that's okay.

Because eventually, you're going to be able to get to a place where you don't need to eat. What I would like you to do is to create some space between you identifying that something's going on for you and you actually putting the food in your mouth.

So, what I want to suggest that you do when you're feeling stressed is to connect what's actually going on for you emotionally. And what I mean by that, is when someone says they feel stressed, that to me, is kind of like a conglomeration of emotions. Like I know what stress feels like, but when you say "I feel stressed," I'm not even really sure what that means, because it can mean so many different things.

And so, what I want you to ask yourself is what are the actual feelings that I'm experiencing? So, some examples might be anxiety. You might be feeling frustration. Maybe you feel defeated. Maybe you feel some hopelessness. Maybe you feel pressured. Maybe you feel overwhelmed, and maybe you feel several of these.

But it also would be really good to know what they are because they're so much more descriptive. They so much more readily help you to understand what is emotionally happening for you right now, rather than just using that blanket term of "I'm just feeling stressed. There's just a lot of stress in my life." It's like what does that actually mean?

Then once you have identified what the emotions are that you're feeling, you can spend some time processing them. Now, this is something I've talked about on the podcast before. It's something that I go into super depth in the Weight Loss for Doctors Only Program. So, if you're in there with us right now, then of course, you're going to want to check that out.

If you are not in the program right now, then what are you waiting for my friend? We're starting in September. I hope you're going to join us. I know you want to, it's time. It's time to learn how to do this processing emotions thing.

So, you need to spend some time figuring out what it feels like in your body to have that emotion and be with yourself as you're experiencing it. When you go straight to food or alcohol, you're saying, "I can't be with this, I need this to go away immediately. And so, I'm just going to consume things, put things in my mouth and swallow it down to try to stuff it down, to try to get it to go away, even though it doesn't really actually do that."

Now, what I want to tell you is you might be thinking, "Well, listen, Katrina, that's great if I'm home, but I'm like in the middle of the ICU or in the middle of the emergency department, or whatever, in the middle of clinic, and I can't just like stop and go sit down for 10 minutes to process this." And to that, I say, I completely understand, so understand. Of course, you want to make sure that later in the day, you carve out that time for yourself, but what can you do in the moment?

One of the best things I think you can do is to reconnect to your body. And what I mean by that is just taking a quick moment. I mean, this literally could just be a couple of seconds to take an intentional breath. Maybe two or three, but even one can be really good, where you breathe in deeply, expand that diaphragm, maybe hold it for a second at the top, and then slowly let it release.

I think one of the best ways to get reconnected to your body is to use the breath, but then to also do just a little bit of gentle stretching, or it could be more intense stretching if that feels good to you. Sometimes, I really want to stretch long and hard. But maybe put your arms just over your head, lean to either side for a moment.

Another one that I love that I remember I learned this in yoga a gazillion years ago, and I think it was because I was like at a gym and it was like, I guess, they had like bar classes in there. So, they had ballet bars along the wall. And one thing we did was we went up there and we put our hands on the bar and just bent over.

So, essentially, we were like in a 90-degree angle, feet on the floor, hands on the bar, butt as the angle and like hips hinging right there. And then you just stretch like from that space. So, you're stretching just your back and your shoulders and your lats, and even like can get into your hips a little bit.

And you can just do this on a counter anywhere. Like it feels so, so good. Actually, just talking about it right now makes me feel like I want to go and do it because it feels so good. So, you can take one breath, stretch like that, stand back up. I mean, whatever feels good. Sometimes, I like to just move my wrists, move my hands around, so my wrists are getting a little movement and my ankles, and that alone helps me feel reconnected in my body, not all up in the emotions everywhere, have a little breath, and then like, okay, now I can move on.

So, you could try something like that too. But even before you do that or even maybe while you're doing it, asking yourself, "Okay, what is this stress all about? What are the emotions that are actually behind this?" Just use it as a moment to get in touch with yourself.

And then of course, one of the best things that you can do as soon as you can and is so short to do this, is to listen to the stop stress eating audio that's in the Overeating First Aid Kit. Because you're feeling stressed and the whole point of that audio is to help you to process the stress.

So, that is another thing that you can try. It's very short. It's like six minutes. It is not very long at all. And if you can take a moment, maybe if you have a quick break or if you have a no-show or if you can just even walk into the call room, the bathroom — like just go away somewhere in a patient room just for a minute, just a couple minutes, that might help you to really process that as well.

So, that's the first way, is feeling our emotions, is how we de-stress without food. Then let's talk about the second part of this.

The second part of this, you're probably not going to like me telling you this, but it's really, really true. And what it is, is that you need to work on increasing your capacity to feel bad. Meaning increasing your capacity to feel negative emotion.

Part of the problem that we have when we're stressing and we want food is we want food to make us feel better. We want to stop feeling that stress. So, we have such a small capacity to feel our negative emotions that we're just like... I envision it's like we're almost like wild-eyed, scanning the air, like "Someone, make this go away right away. I got to find something. Like certainly, the nurses' station has some sort of garbage I can shove into my mouth. Like there's got to be something that I can eat that will make this go away" because we do not know how to be with ourselves in negative emotion.

And this is something that you need to practice and you need to develop as a skill for yourself. So, the first thing I want to really impress upon you that's very, very important, I was just coaching a client on this earlier today; is that negative emotions are normal-normal. Do you hear me?

Listen, listen again; it is normal to experience any emotion, including the uncomfortable ones, the ones we deem negative, the ones we don't like to feel, they are all normal. There's nothing wrong with feeling anger, there's nothing wrong with feeling sadness. There's nothing wrong with any emotion. They are all a normal part of being a human being. So, nothing is going wrong if you're feeling one of these emotions.

So, if you have any resistance to this, this is a great place for you to spend a little time with some journaling. Why am I so stuck in believing that negative emotions are bad? Where did that come from? Was that maybe some sort of messaging that you got as a child, where did that come through?

What are you afraid is going to happen if you experience a negative emotion? What do you think how other people are going to treat you if you're experiencing a negative emotion? What is so bad about a negative emotion? Let's find out what that is. It would be really good to find out what the problem is so that you can solve for that.

Sometimes we think that if we are experiencing a negative emotion that people will reject us. Well, then it makes complete sense that you wouldn't want to be rejected, and you would want your negative emotions to go away as soon as possible, hence eating, in response to stress. So, then you have to spend time on that belief that you'll be rejected if you're experiencing a negative emotion. We're working to change that belief to one that serves you.

Now, when this is happening — so, you recognize that you're feeling stress, you're not necessarily going to process it right, then you're going to increase your capacity to feel that; definitely keep breathing, very important that you keep breathing. You want to stay with yourself, be with yourself. Don't try to run away or abandon yourself because it's experiencing an emotion.

If anything, move closer to yourself, meaning be interested and curious about what's happening. What is this emotion? What does it actually feel like?

Let me find out more. Let me learn more. I know you love to learn, so make yourself a student of yourself. Let me understand myself better.

So, you're going to stay with yourself in the emotion if you need to, especially if the emotion needs to come out your eyeballs in the form of tears, you might want to go to the bathroom, stand in a patient room for a second again, like if you have an office that you can go to where you can shut the door, that can be helpful if you need a little moment to yourself. But you can totally do this just anywhere as well.

So, then you need to think about what you are telling yourself as you're experiencing this. Now, one thought that I use a lot for myself, especially when I'm feeling negative emotions because particularly when you're experiencing a negative emotion, it often actually feels like this is never going to end, I'm going to be in this for the rest of my life — this is why we want it to go away.

What I tell myself is this is what it's like to be an adult. It's just very factual. Like this is what it's like to be an adult. Or I might tell myself, this is what it's like to be a normal human. This is what it's like to have a human experience. Just normalizing all of it. It's not good or bad, it just is. This is part of the human experience. This is just how it is.

So, we're working on accepting that right now, I'm feeling this emotion, I'm feeling this stress, feeling whatever other emotions are behind that, and that's okay because it's normal to experience emotions. This is what it's like to be an adult. Nothing is going wrong here, nothing is wrong with me if I'm experiencing these emotions.

So, you can offer that to yourself. I think something else that can be very, very helpful is approaching yourself with love and compassion, which in some ways, that can be considered reparenting. Because there's this part of you that is hurting, this part of you that's feeling very stressed, that's feeling very vulnerable, that's feeling like it's not okay.

And you can meet that part of yourself with another part that says, "Listen, I've got this." So, a way of approaching that with yourself might be, "I'm sorry this is happening, but we're going to get through this" or "You can get through this."

Some people like to have self-talk in the form of "we," some in "you" and whatever feels right for you. I often like to say "we." It's almost like that part of me and me, the real me. That authentic mature part of me: "I'm sorry, this is happening, but we can get through this. We can be with this. We can stay with this."

And offering, "I'm sorry, this is happening," it kind of gives us that compassion that we really want. Someone cares, I care. I care about me. I care about my emotional experience. And you can practice different thoughts, offer yourself different things, and just practice being with it and see how you do.

So, the next time you feel stressed, you're not like, "Ugh, gross, it has to go away immediately." You're going, "Okay, I can be with myself in this. I can stay with myself in this."

Now, if you're feeling like, "I don't know, actually if I can stay with myself in this," I want to offer something else that has recently become quite helpful for me. I know I'd shared on here a while back that I had been using my Peloton bike a lot and really enjoying that. And I was doing some different Peloton challenges to increase fitness and those were really fun.

And then for the last six months or so, I've kind of taken a bit of a break on that. I was working a little bit more on trying to become a runner again and focusing more on my treadmill and running outside a little bit. And you know they always say like the only thing that can get you ready for running is running.

And so, I've been doing that thinking like, "Oh, I'm sure that's kept up my cycling skills or fitness as well." Well, I decided to do recently one of those cycling Peloton challenges again, thinking like, "Oh yeah, I'll just do it the way I was doing it before."

Now, anyone who's really into Peloton riding will know what power zones are and basically, power zones are just a way for the screen to kind of show you your rate of perceived effort based on a kind of a test that you do. And once you do that test, it tells you like, these are your zones. Like this level of effort is like your zone one, which is the easiest, then zone 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, and 7. And most of them are in like zones 2, 3, and 4.

So, I was like, oh, I'm sure my zones are the same. I've been doing this other exercise, like I'm sure that's completely fine, I'm not going to redo my zones. I also didn't want to redo my zones because that zone test is really kind of the worst and I don't like doing it. So, I'm like, no, I'm just going to use my same zones.

So, I get into the first class that they recommend, which is always the easiest of the entire challenge. And man alive, was I sucking some wind. I was like, oh no, I think it might be true that the only way to stay really fit for cycling is to cycle. So, it's like how do you do that with running and cycling? I don't know.

But anyway, I was going through this going like, "Oh my gosh, like I don't think I can do this. I'm not sure I'm going to be able to keep up with this. This is really, really hard."

And so, what I started offering to myself was this little mantra and the little mantra was "Let's just see." And so, I'd be like in zone three, kind of alternate in the easiest ones. You'd alternate between zone three and zone two, and I'd be in zone three and there would be like two minutes left of that round. And I was just like, I mean, I'm like dying. Like I'm not going to be able to do this.

And that's what my brain's telling me. And then I would say to myself, "Well, let's just see, let's just see if you can do another 30 seconds. Let's just see. I wonder, I just kind of wonder if you could do it a little bit longer" and then I'd do another 30 seconds then I'd be like, "Oh, well there's only 90 seconds left. Let's just see, let's just see. I bet you can get to just one minute left. Let's do another 30 seconds. Let's just see."

And then I'd get to one minute left and then I'd be like, "You know what, let's just see if we can just stick with it a little bit longer, just one more minute and see if we can get there."
And turns out I could.

And so, I've used this now several times with myself when it feels really, really hard like that. When all I want to do is give up, when all I want to do is stop trying so hard. And I want to offer you that here, when you are trying to stay with yourself in an emotion that feels uncomfortable.

Let's just see — "Let's just see if we can relax into this. Let's just see if we can take a breath and relax our muscles. Let's just see if we can find where it is in the body and see if there's a way to describe what that is. Let's just see what happens if I just keep breathing and staying curious and do that for a minute, let's just see what happens. And then maybe if we did a minute, maybe we could do another minute. Let's just try and see if it changes. Like I wonder what happens in the second minute. Let's just see ..."

And then you can stay with yourself as you go through the whole process of being with yourself, expanding your capacity to feel bad. And you never know, you may find that as you stay with yourself, the emotion actually somewhat processes itself where you find, "You know what, I'm actually feeling a lot better and I'm ready to get up and keep moving. And it turns out I didn't need that food."

And so, this can be done during the day. This can be done in the evening as well. And I just think it's going to make a huge difference.

So, for sure, go and download the Overeating First Aid Kit right now if you haven't already. It's at katrinaubellmd.com/kit. You're going to get instructions to be able to get this connected to your podcast app. So, our private podcast will drop right into your podcast app and you'll have all three of those audios of me walking you through this process as well.

So, totally guided, totally walking you through it, my voice in your ears, helping you every step along the way. Can't wait for you to try this out. Of course, please send me more of your feedback. So good, I can't wait for you to start seeing how this actually works.

Amazing. Okay, friends have a great rest of your day and I will talk to you next time. Take care, bye-bye.