



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: Well, hello there, my friend. Welcome back. We are inching closer to 300. I tell you when I first started this podcast, if you had told me I'd have 300 episodes, I would've just been like, "What? You're crazy." But here we are every week, just moving forward. So, I'm recording this about ... I don't know, is it about four to five days before my kids go back to school.

And I read something recently, I think it was actually in the paper, where this woman ... it was an opinion piece, and she said, "I'm at the point in summer where I'm mourning that summer is over, even though it's still summer." And that is kind of how I've been feeling.

I've been trying to bring myself back into, but today, it's still summer. And today, you don't have to take anyone anywhere. And you don't have to make lunches and make sure you're there in the pickup line or any of that stuff.

I have to say there is a little bit of a mourning process in my heart right now that the summer fun is coming to an end. And I don't know, I keep telling myself it's usually two weeks of back to school and then it just starts to feel normal again. And the structure actually is nice and it's all good.

There's kind of that freshness that comes in September, kind of like, "Here we are, off on the right foot, ready to get going again." Especially if you have any children who are in school. So, it's an exciting time and also, moving into fall, which is just such a great season, love it so much.

Okay, let's talk about medical legal fears. I've talked briefly about getting sued before. This was a long time ago, several years ago. I've noticed in recent several many weeks, there's been a bit of an uptick in medical legal fears.

The thing about this is, particularly in the United States, I think it's not quite so bad in other countries; but particularly in the United States, it's not new for doctors to be aware of legal ramifications of their actions.

We know that there's a line, like what is considered malpractice, what's not. We go to great lengths to understand what that line is to be really clear about what's okay to do, what's not okay, what's allowed, what's not allowed.

And we recognize that there could be legal trouble in store if there are certain actions that we take or certain actions that we don't take. So, this is a reality. This is something that doctors know. There's a reason that we carry malpractice insurance. And of course, we are human, but it's not like suddenly legal issues are becoming a thing for us.

They've always been a thing for us. I think some specialties are dealing with that more than others. And I think in some of the U.S. states in particular, some of the laws, some are more pro-doctor and some are more pro-patient. So, that can be a little bit different as well.

But like I said, recently, I've seen an uptick in some of those fears. And that seems to coincide with the U.S. Supreme court decision in June, which turned abortion legislation over to individual states. And so, like I said, if you're not in the U.S., you probably have heard about this regardless, and you might be seeing things online about this. You may have your own thoughts and concerns about it, or maybe it's not even really so much of an issue, but I think you're still going to get a lot out of this episode.

Of course, if you are in the U.S. and particularly if this has been something that's been a concern for you, then I just wanted to offer some ways of approaching this.

As I was thinking about this episode, I was thinking about the fear that people experience. And I was kind of thinking about it in terms of a primary fear, secondary fear, and tertiary fear.

And the way I was describing that or kind of defining it as primary fear, is the fear of legal ramifications that the good men and women who are actively providing reproductive care to women right now, that they're experiencing. This is not something to downplay.

I actually saw something in the paper the other day. It was a chart with various states and then a timeline. And they were showing how quickly the laws about what's allowed and what's not allowed have changed, sometimes literally day-by-day, sometimes moment to moment, hour-to-hour. I mean, it's really, really incredible.

And I just want to say that anybody who's struggling with that, that is really, really challenging to be in a position where you don't know where the line is, or you know that at any moment the line could change. So much of what helps us to feel safe, knowing that there are legal ramifications potentially to our actions is knowing where the line is.

Where we're like, okay, well, if I stay in this general vicinity, I know that I'm keeping myself safe, so to speak. And when that line is changing all the time, and you have to keep track of where that line is, that's going to be a lot more challenging. And so, I just want to recognize that fear. I think for a lot of people, the fear is actually covered up with anger.

For a lot of people, and you may want to think about if you qualify for this kind of thing as well. I know I do at times. We'll go to anger first before we actually recognize the fear. And the reason for that, is it's a bit of a fight or flight kind of response. We're feeling like we're not safe, and so we just want to attack. That's the fight component.

We're just like super mad at all the things and all the people and all the decisions, and can be really kind of stuck in anger. But when you really work through the anger, there's usually other things under there, and that is fear. Fear for the self, fear for patients, fear for all the people who are impacted by this.

So, I'm calling that the primary fear. These are the people who are in the trenches doing this actual work. And I think it makes sense to have fear surrounding that.

Secondary fear is I think what's being experienced by doctors and others who are really close to doctors who are offering reproductive care to women. So, if you have a friend from medical school, or maybe you're in a Facebook group or something, and there's these women or doctors in general, men and women who are in the trenches doing this work and you're witness to their struggles and their fears and their confusion — it can be easy for us to take that on, even when we are not actively offering that reproductive care to women, or not actively dealing with the changes to the legal ramifications.

And so, it's just important to recognize that; is this something that's actually directly impacting me? And if not, it's interesting. It's like secondary. It's like we're watching this thing happen to other people, and then we're getting upset about it. And again, I'm not saying that we can't or shouldn't, or it's bad to do that, but just recognizing that, "Oh, okay, this is a more secondary kind of an effect on me."

And then what I'm calling tertiary fear is I think something that a lot of women, particularly in America, are actually going through right now. And I'm describing this as more like a deep down fear. If you really, really spend some time really understanding what is going on for you, if you're upset about these decisions, it's really that these changes are making a lot of women question our value as women, questioning our autonomy of our own bodies.

We are upset and fearful of what often feels to a lot of people as a removal of freedom. And often, that removal of freedom was decided on by men in power, and often white men in power. And that has really shaken a lot of women to their core in the sense that they feel like a right of theirs has been removed. And that will create a lot of fear as well.

And I think, again, this can be masked by anger and other things. Sometimes it could be like, "Why am I just totally munching on food a lot more? Why am I zoning out in front of the TV a lot more?" It can be all an effort to try to not deal with that fear that we're feeling.

So, we understand that this fear exists. We understand that the fear comes from the way that we think. But this is one of those situations where just because we can think something different, doesn't mean that we really want to.

And I just want to be clear on that. We want to make sure that we use coaching tools to aid us. We don't want to be using them against ourselves or telling ourselves we shouldn't be feeling the way that we're feeling. There's something wrong with us that we're struggling in this way, because if we could just change our thinking, then we could feel better.

We don't want to be approaching ourselves in that way. There are definitely times where we want to feel bad about something, and that's okay. We just need to recognize that we are choosing to feel that. But I do think that we have to just get really clear on what it is that we are choosing to feel bad about, and making sure that we really are signing up for that.

So, I have some thoughts, some things to kind of toss out there for you. Feel free to take what resonates and what helps, leave what doesn't. But it's an opportunity for contemplation, for reflection, for building self awareness. This is just another one of those opportunities.

I was just messaging with a friend today, it seems like these growth and self-improvement opportunities never end. And it's like, yep, here's another one. But it just gives us the opportunity. We can just get through it, or we can also take it as an opportunity to learn more about ourselves and to strengthen our relationships with ourselves.

So, for the person who's in that primary fear, the person who is actively offering and providing reproductive care to women, I would just really suggest that bringing yourself into the present as much as possible would be really useful. When we are focusing on the future and worrying, it just really makes us feel worse and more fearful.

So, what I suggest focusing on when you can is identifying what are the facts right now. And also, how can I stay up to date on what's allowed right now? Is there some sort of resource? I know there's been attorneys offering free legal advice; like how can you do your very best to do your due diligence to make sure that you are staying up to date with what the laws are?

Because it certainly doesn't help if we are flippant with that, and then end up finding ourselves in a difficult situation, something that we definitely didn't want, like a legal ramification. So, if we can find out what the facts are, it's so much easier to make decisions moving forward about what we should be doing.

And then the second thing is working to process the fear, the anger, and all the other emotions that would be coming up right now. Now, would be really an excellent time to be getting coaching help or to be working with a therapist.

You don't have to struggle through these things alone. Even just having someone who can hold the space for you to just unpack everything, who's going to listen and challenge you in the best way, not try to convince you of something different. But also, not just agree with any thoughts that are creating a lot of excess pain for you can be really, really healing and beneficial. So, that's what I would recommend there.

And then also, just remember, this is a really hard time. This is a really, really hard time to be a provider of reproductive care for women. And it's not going to last forever in terms of how difficult this feels, but it's feeling difficult right now and painful, and it's okay for it to feel painful.

That's normal, you're not doing something wrong. We don't have to sort of like rage to try to get away from the fear. We can actually process that in a way that's really just more supportive for us, ultimately.

Okay, experiencing secondary fear. So, I would recommend that you work to recognize how you're taking on fear for other people. Sometimes we think that if we feel really, really bad, it'll somehow take some of that bad feeling away from others who are in the trenches. And you cannot feel bad enough to relieve someone else's pain. It just doesn't work that way.

So, that doesn't mean that you necessarily forget that that has happened or ignore it or anything like that. But when you can bring yourself to the present and really ask yourself, if how you're showing up for yourself and others is actually helping them and you, you can start to figure out is my response actually something that's going to be useful.

Of course, again, you're going to be wanting to process the emotions that come up for you. But if you find yourself stewing in that anger and that fear, you might find that's really just not serving anybody. We want to process those emotions and then we want to work on moving forward.

And so many people feel like I want to get involved, I want to help, but they don't know what to do. And if that's you, then I would just recommend that you consider thinking about how you can focus that energy toward becoming an advocate or more of an ally. Like finding out what can you actually do that will help the people involved in this as they move forward.

Because us just adding to the fear and anger, generally, isn't creating any positive results for anybody. So, that would be something to recognize. And again, if you're feeling really stuck in those emotions, again coaching or therapy can be very helpful with that.

And then let's talk about the tertiary fear, that deeper, deeper work. For this, I definitely recommend coaching or therapy if you're really struggling.

The thing to remember here is that self worth and the value that you see in yourself. Your value as a human being, this is going to come from within. So, just because others don't or don't appear to value women in the way that you'd like them to do, doesn't mean that you should agree with them.

So, we want to be doing work on ourselves basically as an act of resistance. We want to be focusing on supporting ourselves, making sure we're rock solid in our self worth, our confidence, our value, so that when we are coming into the world, when we're approaching the world, we are actually helpful in moving things forward. So, it can be easy to sort of devolve into this deep hole.

And when you find yourself there, that's when it's time to reach out that hand. There are so many people, myself included, of course, because we of course, cover all of these types of things in our program and weight loss for doctors only as well. But there's so many people who are there and waiting and so willing and excited to help you do this work.

Because like I said, it is act of resistance. It is a way to not only heal ourselves in our generation, but also, to heal future generations as well, so that as new decisions are made, by people in positions of power, everybody is given the freedoms that they desire and are supported in a way that they need to be.

So, I just want to leave it at that. I think there's a lot to contemplate here. Of course, this abortion issue is one that can be a hot button topic for a lot of people, heavily partisan with people on either side. But I think people are feeling big emotions no matter what.

And it's just important that we recognize this is what's happening for us, how can we work through this, and then move forward in doing something that really is productive, that really does help ourselves and help those around us. And that's what I wanted to offer to you here.

Thank you so much for being here today. Thank you for your attention and I will catch you next time. Alright, take care. Bye-bye.