



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

[00:00:08] Welcome to the Weight Loss for Busy Physicians podcast. I'm your host, master certified life and weight loss coach, Katrina Ubell, M.D. This is the podcast where busy doctors like you come to learn how to lose weight for the last time by harnessing the power of your mind. If you're looking to overcome your stress, eating and exhaustion and move into freedom around food, you're in the right place. Well. Hello there my friend. Welcome to today's episode. Thanks for joining me. So glad that you're here today. I'm excited to talk to you about something that I think has caused a lot of pounds to be gained over the years, a lot of wine to be drunk.

And that is politics, right? You know, you may or may not know that I talk [00:01:00] a lot about creating peace and freedom around food and permanent weight loss, but what about peace and freedom around politics? So interestingly, I mean, several months ago, I think it was probably around the summer is when in America, in the United States, we started seeing some people declaring their candidacy for president for the 2024 election. So about a year and a half in advance and kind of right away we started noticing that clients were asking for coaching on this, that they were struggling about the whole, you know, election coming up and what was going to happen. And I think for a lot of people, there's a bit of a, you know, a PTSD kind of a thing over the last several election cycles.

[00:01:47] And I think a lot of people were just sort of feeling like, oh my gosh, I can't do it again. I don't want to do it again. What are we in for now? Just feeling really stressed about it. And so we thought, you know, wouldn't it be good to do a podcast episode [00:02:00] and release it when it was about a year before the actual election in 2024 and call it peace and freedom around politics? And so that's what this episode is as this

episode is coming out. This is about a year from when we are going to be going to the polls.

Of course, for those who are not in the United States, maybe you have something similar around politics in your own nation or, you know, some other stressor that you have, and you can get a lot out of this, because what we're going to talk about actually applies to lots of things. But more specifically, I want to talk about politics and election stress. So I was doing some research on this. I found it pretty interesting. The American Psychological Association does some surveys. Looks like every year in 2016, 52% of Americans, so slightly over half, said the presidential election season in 2016 was a somewhat or very significant source of stress for them. A lot of people, half of people. Then in 2017, 63% [00:03:00] of Americans reported significant stress about the future of our nation.

[00:03:04] This was more than how much stress they experienced about money or work, which is interesting and pretty interesting. And then leading up to the presidential election in 2020, 70% of adults reported high levels of stress leading up to that 2020 presidential election. So almost three fourths of American adults, it's a lot of people. So we know that this is impacting people. We know it's affecting people. And so chances are it has affected you, at least in some way over these last two presidential elections. I think honestly, I think other countries I mean, not to sound like a totally self-centered American, but I think when it's kind of crazy town here in America with our elections and our politics, I think it bleeds out into other areas of the world, too.

I think other, you know, citizens of other countries, they kind of, you know, absorb some of that [00:04:00] drama as well and think it, you know, think it impacts them as well. So maybe that's you as well. So I wanted to talk to you about some things that you can start thinking about and applying in order to support yourself through this next year and even possibly after the election, because it seems that that is an ongoing thing where it's not like the election is over and then we move on. There often is more to come even after that, more drama and stuff. So I have I think about seven different things for you to focus on or consider.

[00:04:33] I don't think you need to do all of these by any stretch, but I do think there are things that would be helpful for you to consider and maybe to come back to this episode

periodically, right? You know, you might find, hey, right now I'm doing okay, or this one, 1 or 2 things are really helping. And as things amp up, maybe things get a little bit more intense. You might want to come back and review what some of these things are. But I do think that if you can get yourself in kind of a routine [00:05:00] with some of these things, hopefully you'll find that the whole election cycle is not impacting you negatively as much as it might have otherwise done.

So let's talk about ways that you can create peace and freedom around politics. So moderating your media intake is going to be a huge part of it. And that's why I put this first. And I have a couple different parts of this that I want to talk about. I think everybody is kind of like, got to get off social media. And I got to, you know, look at this and stop looking at that and everything. There are definitely some things that I think can be really helpful. And it could be that. You're actually fine interacting with the media in a certain way. Most of the time, but you'll be able to identify for yourself when it's not going so well anymore.

[00:05:47] And it's time to make some adjustments. So meaning like how you feel inside when you're on the platform is going to be a helpful determinant for you on. Is this working for you or not. Right. How do you know if you should make a change [00:06:00] by the way that you feel when you're on, like consuming the media or on that platform, or when you stop using it? If you stop it and you're like, oh my gosh, I feel horrible. That's something you should pay attention to.

So first thing to consider with media intake is deciding when to check if you are using the news apps on your phone as something that you know, just quick check a way to kind of distract yourself when you're at work. If you're having to wait somewhere, you know, let me just check in with the news and see what's going on. That might be a problem for you. You might decide that you check just once a day, or you check just morning and night. What's going on leading into the day? What happened today at the end of the day and then leaving it at that. So deciding when to check can be very, very helpful. In terms of getting your news from social media. I learned many, many years ago back when I was on Facebook still, which I haven't been on for many, many years because it just makes me [00:07:00] feel really bad about myself.

[00:07:02] But just straight up it does. Well, I'll put it this way I have a lot of thoughts that make me feel bad about myself when I'm on Facebook getting news from social versus from respected news organizations, something that you might want to really consider. You know, what is the source? I think a lot of us know this. Like it's just kind of like when you're looking at medical research, like, okay, well, who did this study? Where was it done? How many people were involved in this? You know, we know how to look at a study and kind of, you know, piece it apart a little bit like, can we really trust the results of this study?

Are we convinced enough by the results of this study that we want to change the way that we practice? Right. Like there's a lot that we've learned in that. And I think that we can extrapolate that to the news. Who wrote this? What authority do they have to write this? Do I trust the organization that they work for? Does this organization do any kind of meaningful [00:08:00] fact checking that we feel like we can trust or believe? Is there a sensationalism added to this? Is this very partizan? You know, things like that. Like really looking at who the source is, I think is going to be important. I decided myself several, many years ago now that I only look at respected news organizations, and there are two that I look at.

[00:08:24] I think I've mentioned this before. I'll just share with you. In case you're wondering, I have a subscription to the New York Times and the Wall Street Journal, and I feel like they're about pretty evenly. I don't think either one of them is neutral. I'm not sure that anybody can really be neutral these days, but I feel like each one of them, the partizanship that they exhibit, is about equal on their respective sides, if that makes sense. So while I may. Agree with one more often than the other. I will look at both to see how the same news event is being portrayed, [00:09:00] so that I can understand maybe a little bit more on like, oh, that's interesting because that's a pretty sensationalized title.

And over here it's being positioned in this way. That's interesting. Not that I necessarily believe one more than the other, but just seeing the difference. I think it can be very, very helpful to us when it comes to the drama we feel around politics, to be able to see both sides. And I don't think that we need to go to the extremes on both sides. And like I said, I mean, on the one organization that I tend to not align with, I usually do not read

any of their opinion pieces because I just don't find them to be useful or helpful to me. So I just know that I don't look at that, but I will look at similar kind of articles.

[00:09:50] And honestly, sometimes they have some really interesting articles in there about other things that I really like to read too. So that's a way of making sure that you're getting news that [00:10:00] is helpful to you. Now let's talk about that. I talked about reading it. A lot of people find that reading their news rather than watching. So watching videos or TV or cable news or anything like that, reading it does not make them feel as bad. So, you know, if you live with someone who wants, you know, cable news on all of the time, like figuring out a way to kind of balance that out, turn that off.

It seems that reading it impacts us sort of like neurologically, emotionally less. So when you're trying to create peace and freedom around politics, reading rather than watching can be very helpful. There are many times when I only look at the headlines and like the subheadline. Sometimes I'll then read maybe a couple of the initial paragraphs if it's just like, yeah, this is a no. It's very easy to get out of that. It's it is harder when the news on TV is just being determined for you. What they're talking about is being determined, for you don't have as much agency in the selection of what you're consuming. So we talked [00:11:00] also about learning about opposing opinions and then being curious, cultivating some curiosity.

[00:11:04] It's really common for us to be so dug in that our way is right, and that anybody who doesn't believe the things that we believe is completely, you know, misinformed or a horrible person. And that is not the case the majority of the time. So I have found it to be helpful to try to be curious, to try to understand where people who have opposing viewpoints might be coming from, trying to see, like, where are the things that I actually agree with? What are the things that we actually all have in common that can really help to make it more peaceful, more freeing?

You know where you are keeping yourself informed, but you're not feeling like you're going on this massive, intense emotional ride. So moderating your media intake so so, so, so, so important. I also believe that it's okay to take a couple of days off if you really want to, if [00:12:00] that's going to be supportive for you. I think that we should honor that. Taking that time, I think is really, really important. If that's what's going to really help your nervous system, to settle down for you, to start feeling grounded, for you to stop

feeling like everything is falling apart. Okay. So that leads me into knowing what the triggers are that you have and strategizing to avoid them. Now, this doesn't mean you don't really love the word trigger. Not my thing so much. I think there's a lot of problems with that language, but there are times when there are certain things that, you know, as soon as we consume them or we engage in a conversation around them, it's like happening to us.

[00:12:37] It doesn't feel like it's in control. It activates something within us that we have a hard time. Kind of like, let's the horses out of the barn. We have a hard time getting those horses back in, so to speak. We are like completely activated, completely upset by things, knowing what that is, and then coming up with ways, different strategies to try to modulate that for ourselves, [00:13:00] to avoid those things I think is very, very important. Like one thing in particular is say you're operating and then all of a sudden people start having this whole conversation, you know, especially if you're the doctor, which if you're listening to this, you probably are like, you're allowed to say, hey, you guys, this is my or we're not going to be talking about politics.

You could even start every case with, hey, you know, what are you doing your time out and you're going and hey guys, we're not going to be talking about politics today. We're talking about any other topic, but no politics today in the O.R., please, and thank you. Right. And then anybody starts talking about it and you're like, hey, remember, have a boundary here. We're not going to be talking about this stuff. I mean, it's just one example, right? Or someone starts talking about it.

[00:13:40] You can just change the subject. You can say, oh, hey, you know what I wanted to ask you about? I need to change the subject. I want to ask you about this other thing. You can come up with other ways to still be able to interact with people and not have to talk about that. If it is something that tends to really upset you and create problems for you. Let's talk about scheduling time to worry, [00:14:00] because worry is a huge part of this. Anxiety is a huge part of this.

So we're feeling anxious, right? We're worried about what's going on. We don't know what's going to happen when we're worrying all day. It really is a problem for us. It creates a lot more issues. So what if you consider scheduling some time to worry? You give yourself ten minutes, 15 minutes, you know, once a day, maybe twice a day if

you've got the time. And so when it's not those schedule times to worry and your brain is like, hey, let's be anxious about this, you can be like, oh, you know what? I'm not worrying right now. I'm going to worry about that later. Like, we'll have time to give those thoughts and those concerns some airtime, but it's not right now and that can give you some of that peace and freedom during the day. Then when it's time to worry, then you can sit there, you can talk about it to a friend, you can lament about the whole thing.

[00:14:50] You can journal about it. Not like trying to convince yourself to not be worried, but just to get it out. There's a lot to be said for just the sort of expunging of it [00:15:00] from you. It's like a catharsis. Like what are all the worries? Get them out on paper. I'm freaked out. So scared about all the different things. Get that all out and then we can do the next thing if that's helpful. Getting it all out might be all that you really need, and you might feel that sense of calm and peace after just getting it out.

But if not, and that your time of worrying is up, then let's talk about the next thing, which is practicing some mindfulness. So what can we do to get ourselves back grounded into our own bodies, into reality, into the current space that we're in. And so, you know, worry is about the future. So let's think about today and where we are. And so, you know, we hear mindfulness. We were like, oh my God, here we go with the meditation again I don't like to meditate. Meditation can be amazing. There's lots of ways to try it. But that's not the only thing. There's lots of other ways that you can practice mindfulness. You can just do some nice stretching that feels good. You can do some yoga.

[00:15:57] Maybe prayer is helpful. I think [00:16:00] having some solitude in nature, whether you're still or moving, I think can be very, very healing for us really is good for our brains and our bodies. So practicing some mindfulness after the time to worry or really any other time can be very helpful in bringing you into the present. What is actually true right now in your world, and creating that grounded safety that you're needing when you want to feel peace and free. Okay, next, get involved. Right?

Sometimes we have a lot of energy behind this. That anxious energy is energy. And a lot of times we have strong convictions. We believe very strongly in certain things. So get involved, go volunteer, donate, participate in some activism in some way, maybe even joining your political party. You can go and canvass or, you know, do whatever it is

that where you're actually helping to make some change in the world. Doing this can make you feel [00:17:00] more purposeful, like you're taking action, you're making a difference. And it can also give you a sense of accomplishment, which is a natural pleasure. So it's possible to actually have some pleasure coming from the political situation.

So if that's something that you haven't considered and it's something that you really care deeply about, get involved. Okay. And then let's talk about stress relieving activities. Because besides mindfulness and you know that time to worry. There are other things that we can do to just relieve the stress, the stress from the politics, stress from work, stress from relationships, just stress in general, all of it.

[00:17:36] I think we have our baseline stress that we have. And then the election type stuff, the political stuff just adds to it and it starts to feel really, really overwhelming and just like way too much. So I think stress relieving activities, they can be lots of different things. But I think one of the things that can be the most beneficial is doing things that you have some control over. So much about politics [00:18:00] that we don't like is that we feel uncertain and we feel out of control. So doing things that you can know, I'm going to do this and there's going to be this result I want afterward I think can be really beneficial.

So like cleaning can be one thing or decluttering or organizing. And it doesn't have to be tearing your whole house apart. It can be like one drawer, one cabinet cleaning, one room, one bathroom, like something like that. Like it moves your body. It gets you thinking about something else. And at the end you have something to show for it. Same for exercise. You know this is well, well described. That exercise helps to reduce stress. Might be the time now to start incorporating more of that. If you haven't been doing that already you know there's so many other things. But I think other things that help with stress as well are, you know, kind of a little bit escapism, like reading a good novel, having a good conversation with a friend, not about politics, like really tapping into those things that you love to do.

[00:18:56] I recently took. Talked about, sort of like filling yourself up like on [00:19:00] this podcast, right? Like what fills you up, doing some of those things that make you feel good so that you don't need food to fill that hole. More social media, more news intake

isn't going to fill that hole, that's for sure. So taking part in some stress relief activities hopefully every day or most days. And then the final thing to create peace and freedom around politics is coaching. You know, or just even talking about it with a friend. But the problem with talking about it with a friend is that it often starts getting into like, we feel like we want people to agree with us. What's great with coaching is that you are held with neutral space.

It doesn't matter what the coach believes, it's actually not relevant. It gives you an opportunity to get clear on what you believe and what's right for you, and what's going to help you, and then being able to move forward in what's going to help you the most. Sometimes the opportunity to talk to somebody outside of our friend group or outside of the people that we know that agree with us or that disagree with [00:20:00] us, it actually can be very, very supportive for us and help us to feel much more on track, much more kind of in control of our experience of it and much clearer in our thinking of how we want to approach, you know, new challenges moving forward.

[00:20:16] So coaching mean I'm a fan. Obviously it works. It can definitely help you with processing the ups and downs that come with an election cycle. Okay, so just to wrap up here. So we're going to work on moderating our media intake. We're going to understand what really upsets us, what really kind of triggers us. And think about ways to avoid those interactions or change the subject. When those things happen. We're going to schedule some time to worry if we're feeling really anxious. And that way we know we're going to get the worrying in.

We're going to allow our brains to focus on all those scary things, and we're going to give ourselves a break in between worry sessions. We're going to incorporate some mindfulness into our lives in whatever way is [00:21:00] really supportive to us. We're going to get involved. We're going to, you know, have our dollars and our time and energy do the talking right. We're going to move that toward things that we believe in, that we want to see changed or improved in the world. Then we're going to take part in stress relief activities. Okay. So all these things that stress us out, we're going to do things to help us relieve that stress.

[00:21:24] And finally, we're going to take part in some coaching so we can talk it out. We can get some outside help. We can be held with that neutral space. Okay. So we

talked about peace and freedom around politics and these things. But everything I just told you this applies to the Israel-hamas war that's happening, which is very, very deeply upsetting on so many levels for the majority of us. I mean, I would argue if it doesn't upset you, that's, I don't know, kind of maybe kind of concerning. Um, there's other wars going on. There's so many atrocities in Afghanistan. They've had horrible earthquakes recently. There's so many [00:22:00] bad, horrible things going on in this world.

And all of these things that we just talked about can also help you as you're managing your thoughts and your mindset as we go through just the way the world is these days. So whether it's for politics or other difficult, stressful things that are going on in the world, these things can all help with that. I wish you peace and freedom around politics. And around just living life as a human adult in this world because we're being challenged, that's for sure.

And yeah, we're here for you to help support you. I will close it out here with that, and I will talk to you next time. Take care. Bye bye. Ready to start making progress on your weight loss goals? For lots of free help, go to katrinaubellmd.com and click on Free Resources.