



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

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. I'm so glad you're here to join me. I have a really fun interview today with Cledra Gross.

Cledra is a coach, a certified life coach in my weight loss for doctors only program. She's on our coach team and she shared several months ago with [00:01:00] our clients a concept that has resonated with them so much that I had on my list of podcast topic ideas to have her come on and share it with you, because I knew it would make a big difference for you as well. So what she shared at the time, you'll hear more about in the episode, but what she said was that in her life, when she was working other jobs, she finally realized, you know what? I deserve to be happy all seven days of the week, not just Saturday and Sunday. And like, maybe if I'm lucky, one of the easier workdays or something like that.

And like I said, so many of our clients were like, wait, what? Like, I could be enjoying myself more than just on my days off. And it made such a big difference for them. So I'm really excited to have to share with you more of her story, how she came to this conclusion, and then how she created that for herself. And she'll share with you [00:02:00] a little bit more about how she helps our clients to work through that as well. So this is something that's really fun. I'm very excited to share it with you today, so

please enjoy my conversation with Cledra Gross. Cledra, I'm so happy to have you on the podcast. Welcome.

[00:02:16] Thank you. I'm happy to be here.

[00:02:18] All right. This is going to be a fun conversation. So let's just start off with you giving our audience just a little bit of an introduction into who you are and what you do. What's your background?

[00:02:28] You know, my background is in chemical engineering. I like to say that I'm a nerd with a great personality.

[00:02:34] So much love. I think there's a lot of us doctors who are like, yeah, that's me.

[00:02:40] Yes. I mean, I love books, I love science, I love all the things. And chemical engineering was appealing because I read something that said a chemical engineer could do anything. And so I'm like, that's me. I want to be able to do anything. So you didn't.

[00:02:52] Stay though, in chemical engineering, right? So you did that. And then what happened?

[00:02:57] So I actually finished number one in my class [00:03:00] in engineering. So I was really into it as.

[00:03:02] A fellow engineer myself. I'm very impressed by that.

[00:03:05] Well thank you. And so and even went on to graduate studies in engineering. So I share that to say I spent a significant amount of time. But what I realized when I got into it is I didn't enjoy it, even though I was really good at it.

[00:03:17] Yeah, yeah. So then what do you do? We're going to get into that. So so after that, so you said, okay, I'm not going to do that anymore. Then what did you do?

[00:03:26] I decided to go into sales and pharmaceutical sales actually. And because I had been great as an engineer, I'd won awards. You know, that's usually my history, the whole winning awards, doing those things. It was just like the most unbelievable thing to my mentors because they had really advocated for me to, you know, do all of these assignments, these great assignments, get this great visibility. And then I said, I don't think I want to do it anymore.

[00:03:53] Yeah. So you were like totally top in chemical engineering. Then you went to pharmaceutical sales and you totally did very well [00:04:00] there as well.

[00:04:01] Did very well in pharmaceutical sales. I won awards in pharmaceutical sales too.

[00:04:05] And if you really think about it right here, you come with this total science and chemistry background, right? Like you're like the perfect person from like, you know, an understanding of what you're selling standpoint. And then you have the ability to connect with people, which is amazing. So let me ask you this though, because I'm just wondering if I, I'm just guessing, like how I might have thought to myself, were you at that point when you were realizing, okay, think you know the pharmaceutical sales? I think maybe I'm done with that. Were you kind of going like, am I just like, never going to be happy with anything like that? Were you just kind of wondering, like, is this me?

[00:04:38] It's interesting. You know, I've never been asked that. But at that time I do remember thinking like, am I always going to be searching because people would tell me, you should be happy because I had the things, you know, that you could buy and being successful. And it's like, but I wasn't. And so I felt a lot of guilt that I did want different. I did want more. And [00:05:00] I felt that there was more for me, and there was a lot of judgment about, well, why would you want that, given all that you have access to? I mean, pharmaceutical sales is a very coveted, at least at that time.

And this was in the 90s coveted thing to do. And I enjoyed it. You know, this is the thing. It's not that I didn't enjoy engineering or I didn't enjoy pharmaceutical sales. It's just the total fulfillment of my life. You know, and had gotten into this point of my test. My filter is always when I start to talk about my week as a countdown, like, oh, it's hump day. Oh, it's Friday. Oh, Sunday goes so fast. That's always my wake up call that something's off.

I just don't want to live a life where I count down. I want to enjoy all seven days. I made that decision when I first left engineering that I didn't enjoy. I only enjoyed, like, 2 or 3 days a week.

[00:05:53] Was there any kind of, like, inciting event, like a thing that happened that made you realize this? Or was it just a gradual thing where one day, all of a sudden [00:06:00] you just kind of built that awareness of like, look at how this is weird. Like, why do I think about my life like this?

[00:06:07] When I was an engineer, what made me think about it? I actually had a mentor. Well, in my department, there were several people who had retirement calculators that were counting down and I thought, oh my gosh. And it wasn't like a few days. It was years, like two years. Some of them like three years. And they literally were counting down. And so it's almost like a preview of my future. And then there was a woman I never will forget.

There were only two women. The other woman had children. And the way they would talk about her when she would go do things for her kids and I realized, did they like me because of me? Or because I didn't have children and I was single at the time. So my life was work. A lot of my identity was in working. And so with that pivot from engineering to sales, it was, okay, what am I really doing here? And I think I had been in like ten weddings. And I realized, like, maybe you need to think about more than [00:07:00] work. Okay.

[00:07:03] Now let's just pause there for a second leading up to that, like your whole educational experience leading up to that. You know, I know that you've had some time to reflect on that, too, just in terms of like kind of always really just getting a lot of value out of achievement, which so many of our female physician listeners also relate to. I know I can.

[00:07:22] Write, I got a lot of value out of academic achievement, but that was compensation. I was an overweight kid. And so what ended up happening is I was never going to win anything in sports. Never. Okay. Always pick last in gym. Always. Like I was the overweight kid. So the way I got attention was in academics. And so it started really early. And that like identity being wrapped in I could perform in the

classroom. Klager knows the answer and I got hooked on that. And so that was really compensation for I wasn't really even though I had a great personality. I mean, you know, how school is, kids can be [00:08:00] mean. And so just having that journey with weight really led with compensating with performing, you know, now, I know that looking back at the time, I didn't consciously know that that's and.

[00:08:12] I think you're right. I mean, there is so much, you know, approval that we get for that sense of accomplishment. And it's not again, like you said, it's not a conscious thing that we're, you know, rationalizing. But it's like this pattern of this is how I get love. This is how I get acceptance. This is how the people around me accept me. This is how I know that I'm okay or that I'm good. Or, you know, if I do all these things, then I get to believe that I'm going to have a good life in the future. You know, it's just kind of this path. Like, I'm kind of tied to this. So then it would make sense that we just keep challenging ourselves more and more and rising to that occasion, you know, as we go, but constantly looking for that gold star that like stamp of approval.

[00:08:55] The gold star. Exactly. And I think my pivot from pharmaceutical sales into life coaching came [00:09:00] from gold star fatigue. I want a lot of awards in pharmaceutical sales, but I believe looking back at the expense of my first marriage because it was about still achieving and getting and, you know, I'm going to time the children and our house has to be a cul de sac. And, you know, my husband now calls me type triple A, that I'm really wound tight in terms of he's like, you're not type A, you're type triple A, like.

So I'm working on unraveling that. Still it was worse ten years ago, 15 years ago. So, you know, things didn't go the way I planned. It's like everything was I could work hard to change it. So the pivot from pharmaceutical sales to coaching when I could no longer work hard to change, like my marriage, wanting to be a mom, those things then. Okay, I was at the effect of a life that I had no idea what to do because hard work and achievement couldn't solve it.

[00:09:53] Yeah, I mean, I personally can completely relate to that because I think the first time I really felt like I crashed face [00:10:00] first into a wall on that subject was trying to get pregnant. It was just like, you cannot like, work hard enough to create this. That is not a thing, you know what I mean? And I hated it. This is how I do life. This is

how I know I'm okay. I work hard and then I get the result. And that is not necessarily how it works out, not a correlation.

[00:10:22] And because I was a pharmaceutical rep, I knew the reproductive endocrinologist. I knew who were the top people in North Carolina. Like I had contacts, right. And I grew up like, you work hard, you make connections, you network. I knew the best physicians. And so even all of that, when you come to the end of yourself, that's why I called it gold star fatigue. And there wasn't enough hard work to make the UI or the IVF work, and there wasn't enough hard work to carry a pregnancy to term. There wasn't enough. And I had no idea how to cope. And so in walks life coaching.

[00:10:58] Well, like so many people, you found [00:11:00] it for your own self, right? Me too.

[00:11:02] Yeah, exactly. It was the fallen gold star, you know? And they actually hired a life coach for the executive board. The team that I was on at that time as a pharmaceutical rep. Yes, because half of us were getting divorced and then the other half, they were burnt out. So at this time, I covered literally from Maine to Arkansas, and I lived in North Carolina. I was I covered a large territory. I was gone most days of the week. And why I thought that was a great way to start a family, I don't know, but I just thought that I could. It's so funny in.

[00:11:31] Hindsight, right? We're like, no, we totally had it under control. What was I thinking?

[00:11:36] Right. So this woman comes in and she seems a little too bubbly for my taste. Even though I have a great personality. She was a little over the top, but her content was really good. She talked about fulfillment and how life feels, and that was my introduction to oh it. Oh, I can actually ask myself how life feels like. You know, no one asks you in organic chemistry. It [00:12:00] feels like it's you get it done. No, it feels terrible. It sucks. Okay. Yes it does. And people just talking about feelings just wasn't something that I ever, you know, went through in my life.

And so when she said, you know, you get to decide how life feels. It was a totally new mic drop concept for me, and I'm like, I'd never considered. I just thought that however, I

felt felt it didn't matter because the work had to be done. I was so used to pressing through and it didn't matter how I felt.

[00:12:34] Yeah, like sacrificing yourself for the goal.

[00:12:37] Exactly. Because the goal is what mattered, not how I felt.

[00:12:41] Yeah. And then you see the result of living life that way, right? Half the people. Yeah. Long term burnt out the other half of the people with their relationships in shambles. You see that? There's a huge sacrifice personally.

[00:12:53] Huge sacrifice personally. And so you end up having a life that looks great but doesn't feel great. And [00:13:00] that's what I had created for myself. Life looked great, which is why people were like, why would you change it? You have this and this and this. What they didn't know is that I knew how to make struggling look great, and so did a lot of people I was close to at the time. They made struggle look great.

[00:13:15] It's kind of like that duck, you know, they'd say, it's like, you know, the duck got top looks so serene. And then underneath the water, the feeder paddling frantically.

[00:13:23] Yeah, exactly, exactly. And so I ended up hiring that life coach. That was my introduction to life coaching. I thought it was a little too, like, soft and not for me until again, my life was met with something that hard work and my connections with these great physicians like it didn't matter.

[00:13:43] Yeah, it's God, it's like you need to be, like, brought to your knees to finally go, okay, I am willing to think about this in a different way.

[00:13:50] A giant slice of humble pie, because I realized I call myself now a recovering snob. Like I would tell people, you just need to work harder. Like you just need to get [00:14:00] it together. Like plan better time block because I hadn't faced anything where all of those strategies, they literally didn't matter to my heart and my emotions. So going through a divorce, not being a mom. Hard work doesn't change those things. And so I was faced with myself and deciding, okay, what now? Our life design, life now. And that was the biggest pivot of looking at, okay, if I wrote the curriculum for my life and didn't

check boxes, but I actually designed them for myself, then how would that look? Was it kind of like.

[00:14:46] Scary having that opportunity? Because I think so much of us, when we're, you know, these big achievers, it's like the path is already laid out for us. You know, you want to be a chemical engineer. Here you go. Get into an engineering school, then here are all the classes you need to [00:15:00] take. Then all those steps. And even with the awards and stuff, that's another version of that. Do these things accomplish these goals? You will get rewarded. And in this case, it's so not structured. I can only imagine maybe some freedom actually though some relief. You know, I get to pick. But then also oh my gosh I get to pick.

[00:15:23] It was all of that. And the thing is though, the thought of not doing it was worse because what I could not do was to continue to perform. The external applause just did not matter as much to me because what was my life going to really be about?

[00:15:41] Just curious. You don't have to, you know, obviously share the details of that discovery process and deciding that. But did you go through like multiple iterations of figuring that out or did like once you finally got connected to it and got really like grounded and settled, did it come to you pretty quickly? Like, these are the things that are important to me, and this [00:16:00] is how I want it to play out.

[00:16:01] Well, I had support, I believe, in investing heavily in coaching. I mean, this was over 17 years ago. I've had a coach almost every year since. And so, you know, and therapists on and off throughout that. So there was a lot of navigating like, what does that mean? Like you said, I couldn't look around and say, oh, I'll just do what's already, you know, defined. And so there were several iterations to answer your question, because initially I was like, I'm never getting married again. I don't the only man I like is my father. And it's like, you know, so I went through that, that step and who am I in that season? And then okay, wanting love again. So yes, there were several iterations, several iterations. So this is a story that's 17 years old that I'm telling you. Well, and I think it's.

[00:16:47] Important for the audience to recognize. Right. It's not like this is like a three hour intensive with somebody and then like, okay, I've got my marching orders, like I'm



just going to go and live this out. And [00:17:00] I think one thing you said is really important to recognize, which is, you know, what really pushed you on this path was there really was no other option. You know, you weren't willing to live the way you had been living. So then something new has to be created.

So here we are, you know, kind of stepping into that like foggy, you know, mist, it's like one of the Indiana Jones movies where, you know, like he has to cross some horrible, like crevasse or something, and it doesn't look like there's anything a bridge there. And he has to step out first to then actually be supported. I mean, it's it's very like the metaphor of that is so, so huge of like it's huge. I don't know if I'm going to be caught. I don't know what's going to happen. Is this good or bad? I don't know, but I'm willing to take that first step because staying where I'm at is no longer acceptable.

[00:17:48] I couldn't do it. And I had a model like of what's possible. Again, this life coach, she had left corporate and she had started her own business. She was a life coach and now she was speaking for, you know, pharmaceutical companies. And so [00:18:00] I think having that example in a coach helped a lot. You know, not that I wanted to do exactly what she did, but yeah.

[00:18:07] Yeah. Well a lot of people will say like, you know, figure out what you want, then find someone who has that or like something along those lines. Right. And so you can see like how do you do that? That's such a good example. And in this case, you decided to leave this industry and become a life coach yourself. But you know, I know that you coach on this in our program quite a bit as well. And you have talked about how you don't have to actually leave your career. Maybe you want to find a different employment opportunity. I mean, that could be a real possibility, but you don't have to leave entirely the whole profession and do something different. So how do you guide people with that?

[00:18:44] Absolutely not. I mean, it was probably eight years. I was doing life coaching, like on weekends, and I was still a pharmaceutical rep, but I enjoyed it so much more. I will say, in my 22 years, the last eight, I really enjoyed it because that's what coaching did. [00:19:00] It's like owning the way I want to feel. When I realized that I actually could own that by how I chose to think, and how I take care of myself and what I prioritize in terms of my values. Then it was an internal gold star. It was like that internal

applause, like the end of my day. I'm like, I did it, but. I did it not. They congratulated me for doing it.

[00:19:24] Yeah, like because they said I did a good job. I get to believe I did a good job. Exactly.

[00:19:28] It was my conditions. Yeah. And that's what changed it. When you make life enjoyable on your conditions, your terms, when you write the terms of agreement for your life.

[00:19:40] So powerful. I'm just thinking of all of our, so many of our clients, right, who are wanting to be recognized or, you know, doing collaborative work and feeling like, you know, someone else is taking more credit than they are and different things like that. And and not to say that there's not sometimes some political issues and whatever and things you need to work through, but really ultimately, you [00:20:00] know, it doesn't matter so much what everybody else thinks.

You know, they don't need to think you're doing a great job for you to believe you're doing a great job with, you know, patient surveys and stuff, too. It's so hard because, you know, often the people who fill those out are the people who just want to complain. And so it can be so hard to get that feedback. But ultimately, what really we want to matter is, do I feel that I showed up in the best way that I could?

[00:20:23] Exactly. That was just coaching someone earlier to say today on leading our lives instead of reacting to them. And when we realize that we don't have to react, we can actually proactively decide ahead of time how I want to lead my day by our self leadership, who I'm going to be with every interaction. There's so much joy in that because then I'm not attached to how you respond to me or what you think about me. I care, of course, and I want to be open and receptive to feedback, obviously, but the leadership being anchored in what I value in me for the day and the contribution I bring, [00:21:00] that's everything to me. That's everything.

[00:21:03] Don't think that some of this is also just maturity. You know what I mean? Like like just and not that. Like not saying immaturity, but I feel like, you know, just as you age and grow and have more life experiences, like we have the opportunity to mature. I

think not everybody necessarily always takes that opportunity, but many of us do. So as we mature, you know, partly because we realize the old way of thinking, the old way of doing things, this is the result. Maybe don't always like that result or all of the ways that result plays out.

But also I think it's just recognizing, it's just that, you know, it's like as people get older, they just are much tend to be a lot more frank and just say what they think. And there's nothing sugarcoat it. And, you know, things like that. There is something to be said about that of just like, I will not live this way anymore. And I get to decide, like, don't tell me how I am doing as a human in this work or just even in this world, in my life. Like I will decide [00:22:00] that based on what's important to me.

[00:22:02] Exactly. I will decide how I feel in my body and how I feel in my life. I will not adopt that from someone else. Yeah.

[00:22:10] So I just want to touch back on something that you said that I know has resonated with so many of our clients, which is I deserve to be happy all seven days of the week. Many people a light bulb went off with that one or went on. They were like, wait, what? I could be happy seven days of the week.

[00:22:29] Seven days a week. And it's because every day you get to decide, okay, finding the happiness based on what you want to experience and making that experience non-negotiable, like the way I take care of myself is non-negotiable because I know how it makes me feel. You know the energy I bring to every space. I love that that brings me so much happiness.

[00:22:52] But that takes some emotional maturity, too, right? To take on that responsibility, I think, you know, partly because this is how we're taught to think.

[00:23:00] And so many of the people who raise us and, you know, influence us, think opposite that others determine how we feel like when we kind of really incorporate that, like it like seeps into our bones. We realize, no, like, really, I am responsible for all of this, I am responsible. It's really good news.

[00:23:17] You take 100% responsibility and listen, this isn't about being in a state of bliss all seven days like no one does that.

[00:23:23] Yeah, I'm glad you said that. It doesn't mean you're having the best day of your life every day. Yeah, I.

[00:23:27] Can find value in days I'm grieving. So it's like experiencing my life fully is happiness. And sometimes the fullness of that experience includes sadness and grief and pain.

[00:23:39] Yeah. And anxiety and all the all the normal anger overwhelm the stress.

[00:23:46] So it's allowing that entire spectrum of emotional range that's available for us is not just a single state of happiness. I want to make sure I'm not coming across like that. Is being fully present to my life like, what I refuse to do was abandon my life  
[00:24:00] again, like the truth of my life.

[00:24:03] It's powerful. That is really, really good. So for somebody who's listening and they're like, yes, I want this. I know you have kind of to sort of not even like steps necessarily, but two different areas to focus on in creating this. Would you share those?

[00:24:22] Sure. So the first one is that a lot of us spend a lot of time focused on planning what we'll do in life. I would invite you to plan how you want to feel in your life. How do you want to feel? And then kind of reverse engineer that and say like, then what would I need to think, you know, and then the second thing, you know, this whole concept of high five, like, congratulations, high five, all this, we should do that a lot in sales. So I came up with this of like if I high five myself it would be my five core values. So I would really encourage you to listen. You know, what are your values and live from the five values you want to anchor your [00:25:00] life in and prioritize those every day, every single day.

[00:25:05] And what that means just for someone who's like, I hear you, but what does that look like in practice? I mean, I think one of the major ways of doing that is, well, first of all, you need to understand what is important to you, what are your values. But then taking those into consideration, like using them as a filter as you make decisions like that's like, what am I going to do? How am I going to, you know, show up in this interaction? Am I going to say yes or no to this? You know, things like that. They're all

through that lens of is this in alignment with these values? Do I feel that I'm living these values when I am approaching my life in this way, or taking on this project or interacting in this way, like that's the actual nuts and bolts of application in your life.

[00:25:48] That's the application, and it can't go through the filter of your values. Then it doesn't get to your life.

[00:25:55] Mhm. Yeah. Right. That filters got some real small holes on [00:26:00] purpose. Going to block a lot of things on purpose. Oh my gosh that's so good. Okay. So if somebody is interested they're like I too am raising my hand. I would like to feel good seven days of the week. They can work with you in the Weight Loss for doctors only program so they can come and join us, right? Absolutely.

[00:26:23] And they can learn more and we can unpack this even more. Absolutely.

[00:26:27] Love it. This is such good stuff. And I think that sometimes doctors think like I mean, there are definitely like specific uniquenesses, I think, but I think it's good to hear from other professional paths. You know, sometimes it's kind of easy like, well, if I wasn't a doctor then blah blah blah. It's like, no, if you were a lawyer, if you were an engineer, if you were a CPA, if you're, you know, like anything that's like that high achiever, like we probably all would have been drawn into a high achieving, you know, professional kind of environment regardless. [00:27:00] And we'd still be where we are now.

[00:27:04] You'd bring the same brain to it.

[00:27:06] Exactly, exactly. And seeing that someone who is. You know, because it's probably right. It's a combination of, like, strengths, kind of genetically predisposed, you know, intelligence and ability and, you know, just being able to think quickly and things like that and all the life experiences that you bring with it, like so many things, and you can still completely change to serve you because you want to.

[00:27:31] Because you want to. That's the key thing. Because I want to. Because you want to. You're listening, not because someone says you should.

[00:27:39] Yeah. When you take that personal ownership of that change, then it becomes very like, you know, precious, like valuable, like something you really want to protect. So good. Oh my gosh. Okay, Cledra, thank you so much. Thanks for this conversation. It was so fun. I had a great time. Thanks.

Ready to start making progress on your weight loss goals? For lots of free help, go to [katrinaubellmd.com](http://katrinaubellmd.com) and click on Free Resources.