



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 podcast. I'm very, very glad that you're taking the time to spend a little bit of it with me. Thanks so much for being here. I appreciate it, and I know you're going to get some great help today.

Today's topic is something that made a huge difference for me, like massive difference for me when I was not only losing weight for the last time, but also changing my relationship with food and working on creating what I call peace and freedom around food. It's been a really, really important piece of the puzzle. It kind of sounds really obvious and basic, but it sometimes is a little bit more complicated than that for some people. But I am just going to venture to guess that it's something that impacts you at least a little bit. So I can't wait to talk about it. What we're going to be talking about today is only eating food that tastes good to you. It's a really, really important concept that I teach, and I want to tell you how this often shows up for people because you might be like, yeah, that's what I do anyway.

[00:01:41] And that may be true, and it may be that there are actually things that you're eating that you don't even like that much, but you think you have to eat them. So for me, eating things that I didn't like started very early. And it might have for you too. As a child. My family definitely subscribed to like, the Clean Plate Club kind of a thing, which is, you know, you can. That's just more overeating typically. Like it could be food that you like

that tastes really good, but you had to eat more of it than you wanted. But also for us, we had to eat things if we didn't like them. Like even when I was in high school, I would still get one brussel sprout on my plate.

There was no sense in even arguing, so I would just try to eat it as fast as I could to just get it down so I could move on to the rest of the meal. And you know, they always say like, it takes kids so many tries of trying the food before they learn to like it. I do not eat Brussels sprouts. I don't like them. They taste like mini cabbage and I don't like cabbage. So guess what? I don't like them. But because of this mindset that I had, which was like, you know, you should eat these things, even if you don't like it, you should try to figure out a way that you can like it.

[00:02:53] For years in adulthood, I try to get myself to like Brussels sprouts. Also, when they became kind of more popular again and everyone was raving about Brussels sprouts, I'm like, oh, you know what? I just have to figure out a way I like them. And then I remember I made them one time, I don't remember for what holiday or what reason I made them, but I tried another recipe thinking like, maybe if I had pancetta, then they'll taste good or whatever it was. And then I ended up with a terrible stomach bug after that. So that was the end of it. No more after that.

So I was forced to eat that Brussels sprout. I mean, I knew as an older kid there was no sense in digging my heels, but it was like, you will sit at the table until you finish it, you know, kind of a thing. And a lot of that really led to some other issues for me. I would be quite fearful as a child that what we were having for dinner, that I wouldn't like it. You know, I would apparently, you know, say to my mom like, hey, mom, what's for dinner tonight? And then she'd say whatever it was, and if I didn't recognize it, I would say, oh, do I like that? I always ask, like, do I like that? Because I was so afraid? Like, if I don't like it, then I'm going to have to eat it anyway, like a lot of families would have, like, well, then you can have a bowl of Cheerios or something.

[00:04:03] That was not an option for us. So I would have a lot of fear around the food. Like, what if there's something that I don't like? Will I be forced to eat it? And same thing at restaurants. Sometimes I would get really fearful at restaurants, like, what if I order something from the restaurant and I don't like how it comes or how it's prepared? And I was not a picky eater. Like it was not like I'm like all these requirements or

specifications, but I would be so worried that I would then be forced to eat what I ordered that I often would actually go to sleep.

So if there was like a banquet, I would just lay down and just go to sleep and just skip the meal. I definitely did that on many, many occasions. They'd wake me up, we'd leave, and that would be the end of it. And I thought that was just like a quirky thing I did as a kid. And then, uh, many, many years later, a therapist actually pointed out to me like, oh, that's actually dissociative behavior. Like, kids have so little that they can control. But one way of trying to protect yourself as a kid that you can get away with is by going to sleep.

[00:05:04] And I was like, oh, okay. So, at least for me, eating things that didn't taste good to me was like very normalized. It was like, right, this is kind of what we do. Then I came of age, as I know many of you did, right around the era of low fat eating, healthy eating, kind of like, you know, adding sugar to everything, removing fat from everything. And many of those things didn't taste as good because of course, it's the fat that makes a lot of things more palatable and making them more sweet. Like our taste buds can't really effectively pick up on that too much.

So that ended up actually just reducing the amount of pleasure that we got from those foods. So I'm thinking like the Snackwells products. Right. Like, so you're eating those cookies and they're not as good as the real thing. But you know, we're just eating twice as many and telling ourselves that we should be as satisfied when we're not. Really. I remember when there was a period of time where, like, soy all of a sudden was like the huge superfood. And I remember, you know, my mom bringing home soy milk and, like, we shouldn't be drinking cow milk anymore. Soy milk is the thing. And just being like, this is not good. And like, she would, you know, sometimes put it in things like maybe pancakes or something.

[00:06:20] And it was just like, oh, you could totally taste it. And it was just not as good. Right? But I mean, was I gonna do right? You just eat it because it's supposed to be healthier, even though it doesn't actually taste that good. And the same with other superfoods. You know, there's plenty of other things that, like, just pop up as, like, this is the thing and everyone should eat it. And there were so many times when I was like,

well, I don't really like that that much, but it's supposed to be so good for me, so I will eat it then dieting, right?

So I get into dieting. And so in order to make recipes and food, you know, fit into the plan, often the recipes themselves are just like less tasty, less pleasurable. Or, you know, I needed to adapt recipes and change them. So that they were maybe lower calorie or whatever. So then again, they were not as good tasting. I got less pleasure out of them sometimes. And often there were like weird food substitutes, like diet versions of things that were just not as good, like weird diet versions of like bread or crackers, things like that. For a long time when I would go to work, I would just have like an easy lunch. I would bring some sort of like frozen meal or ready, just like open and heat cans of soup. And often they tasted really not very good at all, like really just not great, you know.

[00:07:38] And then I think that many years ago, for about five years, I was vegan. And the same thing happened there where it was like, okay, well, these are all the foods that you can eat. And many of them I didn't like. So there were certain types of like soy products that a lot of vegan people eat for protein. I did not like those. I would try all kinds of things. I would like prepare them in different ways, and the measure for myself of success at that point was, well, if I can make it so that at least it's okay, then I'll eat it like I wasn't even like, what if you just don't like it like that?

Never even crossed my mind. It was like, well, as long as it's not disgusting or doesn't make me gag like, then it's fine. Like that's literally the measure that I was using. I really don't like coconut, I wish I did. Looks like it would be good. Lots of people like it. It's just not my thing. And because coconut is a big thing in a lot of vegan food, I really, really tried to like dried coconut. I mean, I tried it in so many different ways, I tried anyway, I won't get into all the different coconut preparations. I didn't like any of them. And finally I was like, this is madness, what am I doing? But then I felt like if I don't have that though, then I'm not doing the vegan thing right, or it's already a limited range of food that you can eat.

[00:08:52] So then I was fearful. If I don't make myself eat it, then I'm not going to get all the nutrients I need, which is another red flag. Like if enough of the food in the eating plan. If you don't like it, then why are we doing that? Like, maybe that's not the right

thing for you, you know? So anyway, those are just some examples, you know, for you, you might have had certain family events where you were expected to eat things that you don't like. Maybe you never like them. It was never your thing, but you're expected to eat it and you're still expected to eat it.

It could be that someone makes you something that you used to love when you were younger, and now it's just really not your thing anymore. Like, maybe it's just too sweet or your taste buds have adapted. It's just not your thing, but you still feel like you have to eat it. And so I think that that for many of us, this kind of approach to food just has become normal. We're like, right, a significant chunk of the food I eat, I just don't like. Here's even another example. Remembering baby carrots came out like that became sort of a thing. And it was like, oh, it's so easy.

[00:09:56] And you just like, open them up and grab them and like, you don't have to peel them and, you know, cut them up and stuff like that. I totally jumped on that bandwagon like most people. And no, I mean, if you love baby carrots, go for it. This is not a judgment against that. But it took me a very long time to realize, like, I like carrots, but I don't think these taste as good as actual real carrots. Like, you know, I think it might be worth it to me to just, like, peel a carrot and eat it instead of having the baby carrots, because I just don't enjoy them. I don't think they taste as good.

But for the longest time, even though I knew I liked the whole carrots better, I would still eat the baby carrots. So here's the reason why this is ultimately an issue. And it's because it leads to overeating behavior. So very often we're like, I don't get it, like I do so well, and I follow my plan and eat all this super healthy stuff. And then I'm just like, surfing the pantry. Like I just, you know, I don't know why. I just have to have that ice cream or whatever it is, like the chips, like I just see them and I cannot resist and I don't know why I keep doing that. And this can actually be a significant component to why that happens for you. So as human beings, we are wired to get pleasure from our food.

[00:11:13] And it's actually pretty smart if you think about it. If we didn't get pleasure from food, then why would we eat right? We wouldn't be rewarded for eating, and if we didn't eat, we'd starve and we'd die, and then we wouldn't be here, right? Civilization would not exist. So it makes sense that we would get pleasure from our food. So when we deny ourselves that pleasure, right, we could have some pleasure from it. But

instead we are eating things we don't like or that don't taste good. We're getting significantly less pleasure from our food now. A very long time ago, that was all there was anyway. Like say it was like winter. And, you know, I'm talking like extremely long time ago, like hunter gatherer days. Like, if there's nothing else to eat, then there's just nothing else to eat.

And then you just waited until the. Fruit trees had fruit and like, you just ate as many as you could and, you know, stuff like that. So yeah, there are definitely were times where people just didn't get much pleasure out of their food, and that was that. And I think that if somebody really wanted to work on doing that, I think they could. But we live in a different age. It's just different here, right? There's good tasting food available to us for the majority of our meals. So when we ask ourselves to eat these foods that don't taste good to us, we will feel like a pleasure deficit, so to speak.

[00:12:36] Like we will feel like it's not as satisfying as we wanted it to be. Maybe it created like a sensation of fullness, but not of satisfaction. That is one thing that I remember feeling like with those snackwells, it wasn't even the really low calorie, it was just like low fat food. It just was not as satisfying. So you'd keep eating and eating and eating, trying to get that level of satisfaction. But it never came. Or you would just feel so full or you know, that you would stop or you just ran out of food and that was your other indication to stop eating, right?

So when we are asking ourselves to regularly eat food that doesn't taste good to us, it often ends up coming back to bite us later. Because when there is food that is more palatable and pleasurable available to us, we will overeat it. Like say you're like, yeah, I want to have one cookie. You may actually end up eating way more than one cookie because you're trying to counteract for that lack of pleasure. I think that having a very like a satisfying meal, which does not mean overeating it, but just feeling like good in your body. And it tasted really good. Like I remember that being actually very surprising to me when I first started doing this and kind of decided for myself, hey, you know what? I don't eat food that doesn't taste good to me.

[00:13:55] I'm just not gonna do it anymore. Like realizing how much more enjoyable a meal really was and then just noticing on its own without me trying to do anything besides just eating food that tasted good to me. Noticing how much more satisfying that

meal was in the sense that I wasn't, you know, an hour, a couple hours later looking for the next thing. Like it just wasn't really a need. Like my brain wasn't signaling to me, hey, it's time to get the food that actually tastes good. Now, I think that this is something that it can take you kind of off guard by how much of a difference it makes.

So when you're thinking like, I'm definitely not hungry, why am I eating this? It can be really good to look back and go, well, what have I eaten most recently? Am I just really needing, you know, something that's going to be satisfying to me, right? Like, is that why I'm doing this? It would be good to understand those patterns for sure. When you deny yourself of that pleasure, you will likely seek it out in other places, and I think some people will try to find it in other ways. Like sometimes, you know, they're drinking or they're shopping. Smoking, like all the things that we talk about spending time on social media. But I think for people who really get a lot of pleasure from their food, it's usually just back to food again.

[00:15:17] Right? So you've denied yourself that pleasure because you're whatever trying to diet or whoever said that this was healthy or whatever it is, and then you will end up circling back to food. And the sad thing is that we'll often make that mean something negative about us. Like, oh, I'm just like so weak and undisciplined. And, you know, I said that this morning I was going to follow my plan. And then a couple hours later, I can't do it. And like, why is my willpower always run out like this? Which, I mean, that's what willpower does anyway. But, you know, just like lamenting and making it mean something negative about us, when great solution could just be making sure that what you eat is something you actually enjoy.

A little side note to this is slowing down your eating enough that you can actually taste the pleasure that you would get from these foods that you enjoy that taste good to you, right? This is such a big reason why I don't think it makes any sense. When people work with like a weight loss coach or whoever who gives them meal plans. Like what if you don't like that food? Like, I was like, maybe you can figure out substitutions or something, but it kind of presupposes that everybody enjoys the same things, or that the same foods have the same effect on all people and they really, really don't.

[00:16:30] So while it's important to eat food that tastes good to you, it's also important to slow down enough that you actually let yourself taste it. So an example of that is if

you have small children and you're trying to eat your dinner and help them, and so you're kind of like shoveling the food in your mouth, and you're just not present with yourself and what you're eating. And then the meal's over and you've eaten enough, but you may go back and eat more or eat other things because you're still looking for that pleasure.

If you're not actually present with yourself while you're eating it, you'll have missed that pleasure. So I always think it's better if you have a hard time staying present. The kids need all this help. It's better to just feed them and then eat after or before so that you can actually be there with yourself as you eat and taste the food and get that pleasure out of it. So that proper amount of food, meaning the amount of food your body needs. Is enough and you are looking to overeat to try to fill in more of that pleasure. Right. I also think that eating food that tastes good to you, and only that, is a sign of respect to yourself. Right. I look at it like, you know, I respect myself enough to not force myself to eat or drink things I don't like.

[00:17:43] This just happened the other day and my husband got some sort of drink from somewhere, and he opened it up and he was like, you know, gave it to me and I took I didn't even take two sips. Yeah, I did, I took one sip and I was like, oh. Mhm. I don't know about this. Like I took a second one. I was like yeah I'm not going to drink this. And I literally poured it out. I'm like, I don't like this and I respect myself enough that I will not force myself to have things that I don't like.

All right, so as I wrap this up, I want to tell you of a story. This was actually the spark that inspired this episode. I was talking to a friend of mine, and she was telling me how she'd just been out on a date and went with her date to a brewery like brewpub type of place. And she doesn't enjoy beer. It's just not a thing that she likes. And so I was so proud of her. She decided that she was just going to have water. I guess they didn't really serve, you know, other drinks that she was interested in. And so this date was kind of like really kind of thrown by it. Like, you know, you don't want a beer, like, I can get you a beer. And she's like, no, I'll just have water. And it wasn't a big deal to her.

[00:18:50] But at first it was a big deal to him until she explained to him, like, I'm totally enjoying myself. I am more than happy to drink this water. Like, why is it important to you that I have beer while we're here? And then heard from him like, oh, well, you know,

I just really enjoy the environment here and I just really like, you know, the vibe of it all. And I like all the events that they do and this and that. And so he was wanting to share that enjoyment that he has with going there and having a beer with her.

And he was mistakenly thinking that in order for her to share that experience with him, she needed to be swallowing beer. She didn't. Right. So we were just talking about that. She's like, yeah, I learned that from you. Like, if I don't like beer, I'm not gonna make myself drink a beer just because this guy here is expecting me to. I was so proud of her. I was like, yes, that's the way to approach it. If you don't like it or it's just not hitting you right. Or like some days you like it and today you just don't want it. Do not have it. Do not have it. Respect yourself enough to only feed yourself, you know. Hydrate yourself with things that taste good to you. Okay, this is like even this one thing alone. If you just do this, this can make a big difference.

[00:20:01] And think about the freedom that you feel from having to eat all these foods that you don't even like. It's so nice to not even have to contemplate. Oh, should I have that thing? I don't really like it that much, but maybe I should, because maybe it doesn't. No, I don't need things. I don't like the end. Right. So what are the things that I like here? And if I need to have it prepared in an alternative way to suit me, I will ask for that. But I'll tell you, most of the time you don't.

Actually, you know, you can still find things that are very, very supportive for your body that also still tastes good. A lot of places, a lot of restaurants. Okay, so that's it. I strongly encourage you to only eat food and drink beverages that taste good to you. Okay. I want to be like, you're welcome. And honestly, it's such a gift to give yourself. So let's do that and see what happens. It's a great way to approach this new year for sure. And with that I will say goodbye.

Thank you so much for your attention today, and please enjoy all the food that tastes good to you that you're going to be consuming moving forward. Have a good one. 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.