



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. This is a topic that I have had multiple requests for over the years, and I never felt like I had anything that I could contribute to the conversation until now.

And I'm so actually really delighted with myself that I'm at a place where I feel like I actually can offer you some tidbits or thoughts into my experience with public speaking, and how I overcame my fear of it. It was really, really a difficult thing that I've been working on for quite some time, and I do finally feel like I'm at a place where I have some resolution around it. I know this is something that a lot of people struggle with, and I wanted to offer to you what really helped me and a little bit more about my journey, what helped me is like surprising to me and totally kind of like a duh kind of a thing, both at the same time. So I'll explain. But I will just start off by telling you that even though this is our 364th conversation that we're having on this podcast, and I definitely love connecting with people, coaching people, talking to people, all of that public speaking is definitely not my thing, and it never has been my thing.

[00:01:57] It is not something that I naturally enjoy. It's not something that I have, you know, sought out. Even when I was younger, I really didn't like it when all the attention was on me for something like that. So having to get up and give a talk in class, I would get just extremely, extremely nervous. I really didn't like it. Connecting with people in a

small group setting or one on one just was very different for me. But like being up on a stage or in front of the classroom, just really not good.

To the point where when it was time to get married in my mid-twenties, I got married on a beach in Hawaii with my immediate family members around me, and I didn't even want to have a party when we got back. But we did. I was convinced to do that, and we did. But we did it in a format where all the attention wasn't on us. And even with the eight family members who were at the wedding with us at the beach, all their attention on us when we were getting married, I still felt uncomfortable. So this is just. Me, you know what I mean? Like I come to this public speaking fear.

[00:03:01] Honestly, it is just something that I have not enjoyed. So it made sense that in, you know, working as a pediatrician in the office, in individual rooms, you know, I excelled in that environment, you know, small group setting, really connecting with people on that deeper level. That was definitely more of my comfort zone. And I didn't have any kind of position where I really needed to speak to groups for quite some time. And then I decided to do this business, this company, this coaching thing, which if you don't know my story, I've talked about it several times in other parts of this podcast, but it definitely wasn't expected. It definitely was not really on my radar of like, oh, and then I'm gonna, you know, become a business owner.

That was just sort of was kind of accidental how this all ended up happening. And then I was asked to do some speaking, and I found it interesting. What my experience was speaking was when it came time, early on the early days of my company to do some, you know, essentially what we call webinars. Some like group calls via zoom. I was very nervous about that, too. I mean, I remember doing my very, very, very first webinar, and, I mean, I was a mess from nervousness, like extremely uncomfortable. I'm not sure, to be honest with you, if nervousness, just as a general emotion, feels worse to me than it seems that it feels to other people, or if the extent of my nervousness is just more intense than maybe what other people experience.

[00:04:32] But it's always interesting to me when people express that they are nervous and it's just not that big of a deal to them. I mean, for me, the way I feel in my body is very uncomfortable, and one of the things that I find very interesting is when I'm very nervous, I actually get very tired. I yawn a lot. I feel like I have no energy, I can't think

very well, and all I want to do is go to sleep. And what I've learned over the course of time is that's actually a bit of a dissociative response. It's like, this is so uncomfortable that how about you just go to sleep and then you can put yourself out of your misery? So that's the extent of the discomfort that I have experienced when it comes to speaking.

And so I would often ask myself like, why do I even put myself through this? What I found with speaking on a like zoom environment was that I was very nervous at first, but I gave the same presentation several times and I got more comfortable with that presentation, and somehow my thoughts around it changed. I think it also helped that I was in the safety of my own home, you know, familiar surroundings and in a webinar type setting, you cannot see the people who are attending. And so it's still to me, felt like I was having a conversation with just one person or a couple of people.

[00:05:55] It didn't have the same feeling to me as I might feel if I'm standing in front of a room in front of 50 people or 100 people or more. So I got used to that and became more comfortable with that. I was even very, very nervous to coach people in a video setting early on. I actually have been doing this so long that I used to coach people on the phone way back in the day. I know a long time ago people still talked on the phone, and I knew then that I could do video calls, and it took me a while to build my confidence in doing that. It really was just something that was uncomfortable for me. But with like enough reps and enough practice, it became something that I became very comfortable with so I could see how I could make progress.

It's not like I didn't think I could improve or make progress, but still like up on a stage or being asked to speak to a larger group was something that I felt a lot less comfort around. And I had a lot of thoughts around it that, you know, were difficult. What was also difficult is that I also had thoughts that, you know, speaking to groups was a great opportunity to spread this message that I felt so passionate about. People were asking me to come and help, and I wanted to be able to say yes and do that, but not only just say yes and do that, but do it in an effective way where it made an impact and made a difference for the people who were listening.

[00:07:21] I don't think that I'm the only one who does not enjoy listening to a speaker who is boring, or where I can't follow the message, you know, or you come out of that

and you're like, well, just lost an hour of my life. Don't give me that was like totally daydreaming or just wasn't there, you know, not paying attention. And so I think I also put some pressure on myself. I didn't want to be that person. I really wanted people to come out of a presentation that I had led feeling inspired or good or hopeful or, you know, just challenged to think in a.

Run away or something like that. Over the last many years, I tried lots of different things. I mean, even pre-COVID times I signed up to work with, like within this, like how to speak better kind of a program and thinking, you know, this is going to make me more comfortable. You know, I know people who are very comfortable on stage and really dynamic. And I thought, you know, I really want to be like them. Like, I just have to learn how to do this. I tried several different programs like that, and I did not find them really to be the thing that I needed.

[00:08:27] Sometimes it was about like, you know, stage blocking, like where you're moving around on the stage. I'm like, I can't even think about where I'm moving on the stage because I'm trying to not forget what I'm supposed to talk about. And like, I'm just so in my head, like, it just felt like what they were helping with would be something that I would need way down the road. I felt like many times the services were geared toward people who really wanted to be speaking a lot. So either they wanted to be a professional keynoter and travel around and do that a lot, or maybe even for their work.

They would give presentations again and again and again. And while I was open to doing some speaking, you know, I have a family life and I was just definitely not going to be on the road most weeks of the month, that was just not going to be the life that I wanted. So I didn't find those to be helpful. At one point, I hired a speaking coach to help me write a talk, thinking like, well, if the structure of it is good, then I can do the delivery and work on that, and then I can just repeat this talk again and again. But what I found was that didn't happen. I would try to propose that talk to people who were interested in having me speak, and they didn't want that specific thing.

[00:09:40] They wanted me to do something different. I mean, when I tell you the drama, the mind drama that I have experienced over time around these things, typically what I do is, you know, I'll agree to speak, you know, well in advance, and I'm not thinking about my future self. My today self is like my future self is going to think this is

an amazing idea. It's going to be more than happy to do this talk. And then I forget about it for a long time so I don't have to think about it. Then it starts getting closer and I realize, oh my gosh, I have to think about this. Then I get super up in my head about the whole thing. It's like I forget how to convey anything relevant or interesting or how to teach anything.

For a while I, I start feeling like, you know, I have nothing to contribute. Why did I ever say yes to this? I clearly am not qualified to share on this topic. And then I realize, okay, if you don't start doing something now, this is going to be a complete disaster. So then I start working on it and I basically procrastinate as much as possible. This is historically how it's gone, and I procrastinate as much as I could. Then finally like throw it all together, just sort of like get through the misery kind of as fast as I can present it and have it feel like it went fine.

[00:10:53] You know, I never had an experience where it was like a complete bomb or something was really, really bad. But I think I kept just sort of expecting like some magic will happen when I'm on the stage and like, it's just gonna be awesome. And I never really felt like it was that way. I really, honestly sometimes made it about myself. Like something negative about me. Like other people are just more interesting. Other people are more witty. Other people know how to connect from the stage better than I am. Like, I'm a person who does better with small groups like in that larger group.

That's just not the way. Then I finally worked with a coach, and I actually found working with her to be super helpful. Her name is Deirdre Van Nest. Her company is called Crazy Good Talks. I actually heard about her first from somebody else who said that they were in her program and thought it was amazing. Then I met her just randomly, and I was like, oh wait, yeah, I've heard about you. And we talked some more and I thought, yeah, you know what? I'm gonna do your program. Because she really talked about like there being a structure to creating a good talk, and that made sense to me. I'm like, I have a science brain. You know, logic works well for me. Like, teach me how to do this, and I did.

[00:12:03] I learned so much from Deirdre. A lot of what to do, what not to do, and just how to structure a talk. Like I didn't even really know how to do that. That was incredibly helpful for me. Like, I just needed someone to teach me a general framework that I can

use again and again in her program. Definitely did that. I highly recommend that if that is something that you're interested in. But then I started approaching it the way that, again, a lot of people recommend, which is like you need to write a whole script, you need to memorize it. And that's how you get to be so comfortable kind of thinking about it, like from the standpoint of somebody who's a really successful actor, when they have taken on a role where you forget who they are as a person, and in your mind they are the person that they are playing the character.

I mean, they're not thinking, what's my next line? You know, they know that script in them, and then they can become the person who is saying all of that. And that's what's so powerful. So kind of borrowing from that framework, looking at it like, okay, well, I need to know this information so well that I don't even have to think what's next. It just comes. And so I did that to the point where I was like working for at least an hour a day for over a month, really working on memorizing and like solidifying, you know, a talk that I prepared in my head, like really spent so much time on it, I was willing to get all the help.

[00:13:31] I mean, I got a prescription for propranolol to help just to calm my physiological state because part of it, as I felt like I had a hard time grounding myself because my body was just, like, freaking out. So. And that helped. I, you know, tested that out a few times in advance, and that definitely incrementally helped. I even practiced speaking, like doing the readings at my church occasionally to just try to get myself to stop feeling so uncomfortable about it. I think it helped like a little bit. I don't know if that really helped that much.

But anyway, I gave that talk when I had memorized it and really worked on it, and I think I'd put so much pressure on myself that I had just such almost like a letdown, like a comedown after that talk. That really surprised me. Like emotionally, it was. It had been an extremely draining experience for me. It was just wow, to the point where I was kind of like, you know, if speaking is going to take this much out of me, then I'm not sure that this is really the right thing for me. Like, I need to be able to be more present, you know, in my work, in my home life.

[00:14:37] You know, I mean, I was on vacation in Europe for a week, getting up early every morning to go work on memorizing this talk like it was just like, okay, what is

happening here? And so with some more practice, with some self-reflection, with a lot of thinking and, you know, doing more on this, I have now come to a place where. I have just a totally different relationship with public speaking. So I want to say that, you know, I overcame my fear. Does that mean that I am the best public speaker ever? No. Does it mean that I am the most engaging person on the stage? No. Does it mean that I still have a hard time moving around on stage?

Yes. Like I you know, you're supposed to move around and stuff. I'm terrible at that. Like my feet get planted. I don't want to move. But the difference is, is that I've decided that that's not that big of a deal. Like nobody really cares. And would it make it, like, 1% better if I moved around? Yeah, I probably would. And you know what? Maybe someday I'll feel like moving. And if I don't, that's also okay. What really happened? What really helped me to overcome this fear was true self-acceptance. What I mean by that is recognizing that I know who I am and what I do. I am not a professional keynoter. I don't want to be a professional Keynoter therefore, trying to sound like a professional keynoter doesn't make sense.

[00:15:59] It's not me. It's not authentic to who I am. And why would I spend time trying to do that right? When I would try to look so professional. Sometimes I felt, to be honest, like I'd be speaking at a medical conference. That was often the the types of places that would want me to speak. It felt like it wasn't the right fit. Like how I had learned to speak would be better at like a business conference or, you know, an inspirational, I don't know, like a, you know, personal development conference or something, to the point where this was just like a feeling. It was like an intuitive sense that I got, that it was so different from what people are expecting at a conference like that. It was like they couldn't really take it in.

It was just like [00:16:43] already the topics that I were, I was talking about were totally different than the typical that they would get at a medical conference, and then bringing kind of that keynote or energy, it just it did not match. And it was like I knew that. But I kept trying to do it that way because the quote unquote proverbial, they, you know, that's what they say you're supposed to do, even though I knew deep down that's not right. It's not actually in alignment with who I am. And I don't feel like I can even convey who I am or convey my message in the best way that I can when I'm coming from that place.

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[00:17:17] [00:17:17]So this is all very interesting, right? Just realizing, wait, nobody knows better than me how to convey my message to any group of people. [00:17:28] So I decided several months ago a few things, and here's what I decided. And when I say I decided them, I mean that I just decided these are true and I believe them. And this has changed everything for me. So here we go. This is how I overcame my fear of public speaking. [00:17:46]

I decided that what I do is good enough. If I make mistakes. If I trip up on my words, if I lose my train of thought occasionally and have to get back to it if I go over on time or like my timing isn't, you know, totally perfect. If I don't walk around in, my feet are glued to the floor the entire time. You know what? Who cares? It's good enough. I've just decided that good enough is good enough. And this, like, perpetual striving to be better really came from a lack. A sense of not being good enough. Like I will be good enough when I can do all these things. What I've decided is, you know what? I'm already good enough. And if and when I decide I want to improve those things or put some more attention onto those things, I can do that. [00:18:30]

[00:18:30] [00:18:30]But what I found is that when I put less pressure on myself, and I already come from a place of sufficiency and enoughness. It doesn't really matter [00:18:41] if a speaker can really connect to you from the stage. Do you really care whether they stood behind a podium or not? Or whether they moved from side to side on the stage or not. No, you don't really care. What you care about. Is the message right? And that leads me to the second belief. The second belief that I have is that what I have to offer is valuable. And. Also kind of a corollary to that is there's no one better than me to express this message, this valuable, valuable message that I have to give.

And so if I come from that place of I am enough, I am good enough, my message is valuable. What I have to say is of service to this group of people. Then I get to just serve and think about them and think so much less about myself, you know? Am I moving? What's the next lines I'm supposed to remember? Like, it's just I can be a lot more engaging from the stage when I just get to be me. I know how to talk. I already know how I talk to people all day long. And so I just decided it's already good enough. So ultimately, I decided that being me is enough, and I don't need to do it anybody else's way.

[00:19:55] Whether it's the structure of the talk, if it's I mean, any of it. Like I just get to do it however I feel will best connect with the audience on that topic in that given moment. If that means that someday I have notes in my hand, then it means that if it means sometimes that I'm relying on my slides more than I should, then maybe sometimes it means that. But what I find is that I don't need to rely so much on it, because I'm then excited to talk to them. I know what the message is. It's not hard to remember and I just share it. I don't need to memorize anything.

This has changed everything for me, to the point where I decided one day I was like, you know, I'm just over it, I'm over it. I am done with this drama that I have around public speaking. This is just what is now going to be true for me. And then I put it to the test and it has been incredible. It has been so much more of an enjoyable experience, something that I can see incorporated into my day to day life. A way for me really to live out my vision and mission for what I want to do with this work, which is to change the way the whole medical community approaches weight loss. Like I can further that mission when I'm able to convey my valuable message and be myself.

[00:21:16] So where this applies to you is I know so many people really struggle with having to give grand rounds or having to speak at conferences or things like that. And I want to invite you to consider these things that I talked about. Like I said, like, I'm glad that I learned some best practices in how to create a talk and you know, how to do slides and things like that. That was all very helpful. And I will tell you that Deirdre's program really was the most useful for me of the things that I did like by leaps and bounds. She also has a podcast called Crazy Good Talks, so you can check out for free if you want to. Very helpful. So that all was good. Like, I definitely think there are some things that you can learn.

And then after that, just deciding why what you're teaching about, talking about conveying is of interest. Like if you're excited about it, people are going to get behind you with that excitement. Like, if you can get to a place where you can just be yourself and you know that you being you is enough. That's going to be the one of the best talks that they hear. It's going to be really engaging and interesting. So I wish it was like, listen, I found this one specific thing. That's the thing. It really was kind of a culmination of experiences and learning. But ultimately what it came down to was my relationship

with myself and my opinion of myself and really no longer being interested in torturing myself over this subject matter.

[00:22:45] Will there always be people who are better at public speaking than me? Absolutely. And you know what? I'm totally okay with that now. And that's just it, you know? And when I'm okay with that, I actually do a much better job. It's so fascinating. Right. And then I'm excited to plan the talk. And then I'm not waiting till the last minute and torturing myself with procrastination. And I mean, I just. I put myself through it over the years I really have. So that's what I really want to offer to you. You know, like how to overcome your public speaking is to know that you are enough. Is there always going to be room for improvement? Of course.

You know, can you, you know, have a look like is there a way to make those slides better? Sure. Is there a way to teach this, you know, or maybe share about your research in a way that's more understandable to the audience? Probably. You know, there probably are ways that we can refine and improve and make it better and better. But when you come with the energy, you come with the passion and you allow yourself to be perfectly human, which means that you are perfectly imperfect, people in the audience will connect with you. They will be much more likely to listen and engage and learn something, which is the whole point in the first place, right? That's what I have for you on public speaking.

[00:24:00] Propranolol can help to possibly. For those of us who have a full on physiologic, you know, backlash around it. But I have actually the the last talk that I gave, I didn't even take it. I had it with me and I thought, you know what, if I need this, I'll take it. And I thought, I think I actually don't even need this. So it's interesting, right? Like even my whole physiology can settle down when my nervous system is not so overly activated. Like it was like my body was acting like there was like a true threat. Like the mob in the audience is going to come after me in some way. And thinking about it in that way just obviously, clearly did not serve me.

So if you have some public speaking coming up this year that you are, you know, maybe a little nervous about, a little concerned about, uh, avoiding dreading, you know, wishing someone else would do, wishing you didn't have to do as a part of your job. Just know that this can get better. You know, I mean, you don't have to distract yourself with

snacks while you're preparing the talk or, you know, avoid working on the talk by going and getting something to eat. You can just know I have something valuable to offer. I'm going to figure out what that is.

[00:25:12] Think about how people can hear that, you know, how can I convey it in a way that makes sense to people, is a logical progression, has an arc, a start, a middle, and a finish? Take them through that. And be an interesting human being. That's all you really have to do. I think that's enough. I actually know that's enough. So I'm excited for you to try this and see what happens. This is something that we coach on from time to time in our Weight Loss for doctors Only program.

These are those things, these experiences that can be so emotionally uncomfortable for us in our lives. And I'm so excited that I'm finally at a place where I can offer you something helpful. Like I said, people have asked me to do a podcast about it in the past and I'm like, yeah, I'm not the person you should be asking. And I'm like, no, I do have something to contribute now, which I'm I'm very proud of, actually. I'm very proud of my my progress on this. It's been hard earned, but still really, really, really good stuff.

All right, my friend. Well, I thank you for your attention today. I hope that this has been valuable for you 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.