



# 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 friend. Welcome to today's podcast. I'm really excited to give you a podcast today that feels like quite responsive. So pretty recently I asked podcast listeners, and maybe you are one of the people who responded.

I asked for you to share with me. Just what are the things that you're struggling with so that I can make sure that the free trainings that I do from time to time are focused on things that you want actual help with. And you came through and you answered those questions in a super helpful way. But what I also noticed was your answers gave me a lot of ideas for podcast episodes. Maybe there were some things on there that aren't probably suitable for a full training, but still could really, really benefit you and benefit other women physicians as well. And so today's episode is one of those, and it actually spins off of an episode I did about a month ago where I talked with Coach Judith Gayton about letting someone else dress you, meaning allowing yourself to delegate out certain tasks.

[00:01:43] Like if you love shopping and dressing yourself, then this may be something you would never want to delegate out. But for a lot of women physicians, it's kind of a struggle. Or you have a bunch of things and nothing really goes well together and you're kind of always shopping last minute for things. It's just maybe not your favorite thing, or you just don't feel like you have proper time to deal with it. Or you could just be using

that time to be doing something better with your life, something you enjoy resting, whatever it may be.

And so it kind of introduced that idea of, we don't think so negatively about getting help with childcare or cleaning up around the house or with our yard work or things like that, but why are we less open to getting help in other areas? And so someone wrote in to that survey and said that it had never occurred to her at all to have someone help her with dressing and to delegate that out. And she kind of wondered sort of out loud in our survey, I wonder what else I could delegate out. I wonder what other ways I could make my life easier that I am not even aware of. And so I wanted to bring that to your attention today. She brought up a couple of things. She said she knew that some doctors have a lot of success with an assistant, like a personal assistant or a virtual assistant, but kind of wanted to know a little bit more about that.

[00:03:03] And so I'm taking a little bit more of a broader viewpoint today in terms of just delegation as a whole. I will give you lots of ideas, and I also want to give you some kind of tips and tricks and lessons learned really along the way, because I have had all kinds of different help over the years. And I also have a really fabulous assistant. And so I think I'm someone who's pretty well versed in being able to offer some information, some ideas on how to make it really work for you, but also recognizing that it's not always the best thing to delegate things out.

So let's start with that. It's very easy for us to start thinking right from the get go. Like if someone else would just do this for me, then that would be better. I cannot tell you how many times people have told me if I just had a personal chef. Then I would always eat on track. Lies. That's what I want to say about that. Okay. Because here's the thing. That person is not going to force feed you that food. So they have created all this like amazing, unplanned, really nourishing food for you. If you have urges to eat other stuff, you will still have those urges, right? You will still be able to get candy and chips and anything that you want.

[00:04:22] Like that person doesn't like follow you around and restrict what you're eating. So you only eat that food. So it's very easy for us to think like, if I only had help with something, then that would solve my problem. And I think that sometimes it does solve the problem, and sometimes it doesn't solve the problem, or it solves one aspect

of the problem, but kind of creates a new problem. And so I think the first thing that we need to do when we're thinking about delegation, or we really feel like we're just like stretched to the limit, is just like, take a step back and look at everything and kind of look at it with some fresh eyes before making any sort of rash decisions or reactive decisions that we come to regret later.

So the very first thing that I think is worthwhile for us to do is to look at how we're spending our time. Now, can you do that as like a full time audit where you're writing down how you're spending all of your time throughout the day? You absolutely could do that. Is it necessary? I don't really think so. I think in general, most people know what they're doing. I mean, to a certain extent. And so you can look at it from that angle. But I think what's even more important is what do you like to do? And what do you super duper hate to do? Like what are things that there is just, oh my gosh, if I could just never do that thing ever again, that would be the best thing for me.

[00:05:47] And what are things that you're like? I don't mind doing that so much. I just feel like I'm really stretched to the limit and I can't do it. So I think those two things are very, very different. So I'm going to kind of give you an example from my own life that was really eye opening for me. So let's talk about cleaning the house. And oh, by the way, I'm going to say this now, I'll probably say it again because I really, really, really want to stress this to you.

Please do not compare your own situation to examples that I give or stories from my own life. What's so important here is that we each need to just figure out what works for us in our own lives. So please do not take it as like, oh my gosh, Katrina does this and I should be doing that too. No no no no no. What I would suggest is if you want to think that way, go. Oh, Katrina really thought about all this stuff. I should think about it with my life, too. And then take action accordingly. It's not what I do.

[00:06:41] It's how I thought about it. Okay, that's what I want to give you as an example. So way back when my husband and I got married, it was right before Intern Year started our residency. And when we got married, I think I had a shower or something where somebody asked everybody who attended to give their best piece of marriage advice, and a family friend. On my husband's side, the husband and my husband grew up together. The other husband and his wife, they're both doctors. And

they were, I don't know, are they like three, four years ahead of us? Five, I don't know, somewhere along those lines.

So they had been kind of at the two physician couple thing for longer than we had. And their piece of advice for us was to hire a cleaning lady, even when we felt like we couldn't afford it. That was their advice to us. And so I was like, okay, well, that makes a lot of sense. They were basically saying, you're both going to be exhausted working so much during your training, and neither of you is going to want to clean. And it just prevents so many arguments, like when you're home, you can just rest, do fun things like you don't have to worry about cleaning the house. So okay, so we did we did do that. And we found, I mean, I think at first we started with just like once a month because we were interns and really not making very much money at all.

[00:07:57] And then gradually over time increased that. And then for years and years and years and years, I had someone cleaning the house like many, many, many, many years. Then a little bit before Covid, I had the same person for so long and she decided to transition out. I think doing that work ongoing can sometimes be pretty taxing on people's bodies. So from that time on, we were kind of trying to figure out what we wanted in terms of household help.

And I'll spare you all the details of all the different things that we tried, but but we ended up a few years ago hiring someone to be kind of like full time help in the house. I had kind of gotten the idea like it was inspired to try it from some people that I know. And I thought, you know what? This might really be the thing. This is like the the ultimate in household help. So I hired a full time person to clean the house, cook dinner every night, grocery shop. Up and do the laundry. Those are like the main tasks. And so you may think, oh my gosh, like she had it made. It must have been the best thing ever. And what I'll tell you is that there were some things that were great and there were some things that were not great.

[00:09:11] And. Because of just personal circumstances for the person that we worked with. We worked with her for several years, and then she transitioned out a little while ago. At first it was really easy to think like, oh, I need to find a replacement to do the same thing. And then I decided not to. And here is what I found out. So I was like, okay, so we have been married now this will be 23 years. Yeah, 23 years. We've basically had

a cleaning person our entire marriage. And I was starting to feel like, you know what? I think maybe I want to clean our house ourselves. Part of it was that, to be honest, I felt like the quality of the cleaning was not really kind of like to my standards. Do I have high standards?

I think so. I mean, especially when the compensation, you know, warrants it. I think so, yeah. I think the house really should be spotless. And, um, we're not particularly excessively dirty or messy people, so I felt like that was a reasonable expectation. But I also just had this sense of like, I think we need a break to figure out what it is we need next. And I don't want to hire somebody and then it's just not the right thing. I will also tell you that any time you may know this already, any time you hire somebody to do any work for you, it's one thing when it's like a they come and service your furnace.

[00:10:36] I mean, that's like kind of a different story. But even so, I mean, you do have to manage them a little bit, but when you have someone working for you, you have to manage them and you have to care and you have to give them feedback. You have to follow up with them on things. And to be honest with you, I was really kind of tired of doing that. I was tired of seeing something that wasn't done well and then thinking, oh my gosh, now I have to remember, like write it down to be able to share with this person so that they can do it.

When I could probably just do it myself in 90s, you know what I mean? So I will also say that I never would have tried this idea of cleaning our house ourselves if my children were younger. So my kids right now are ten, 12, and 18. And so I also felt like, no, this is for sure a time in their lives where they can start contributing more. And honestly, it's like a life skills kind of a thing. Like, my children will not be the ones going off to college or whatever they're doing on their own, and not knowing how to wash their own clothes, or wash dishes or scrub a toilet. Like they will know how to do that.

[00:11:39] So why not get started with it? So it was really started as an experiment, and if anything, it's just gotten better and easier. So I've been super shocked at how much I've enjoyed not having a cleaning person. This is my point. Here's what I hope will resonate for you. What I'm about to tell you because I was shocked that I had this experience. But it kind of makes sense if you think about it. Back in the day when I used to overeat a lot, I used to cook and bake a lot as well. I actually realized this during the

pandemic. One of the things that I really enjoyed about baking, in particular, is that I know how to do it. I mean, to me it's just like chem lab.

It's like you follow the instructions, it should work. And I think I know probably more than the average bear about how to make it good. But I felt like if I decide I'm going to make pumpkin bread in now, then in about three hours I will have a good result, like it will be out of the oven. It will taste good. It's like reliable. There's certainty to it. There's like a dependability. Like I know what my emotional state will be after I've done that. And I can feel successful, like I've accomplished something. And it's a good feeling just besides, even just like the eating part of it. So I realized this during the pandemic when I was like, everything felt so uncertain and we didn't know what was going on.

[00:13:03] It's like if I bake some cookies, I am very confident that they're going to actually turn out. I feel quite certain about that. So that was just something I noticed during that time. And what I quickly noticed with cleaning was I got a similar feeling. It completely surprised me. And what I mean by that is with a little bit of work, a little bit of effort, all of a sudden a room or the house would be transformed. Like this same feeling of like the certainty of like I will have a result I'm proud of. It's the same thing with cleaning.

There will be a result that I'm proud of. It'll be clean to my specifications in the way that I want it done. To our family standard. And we can be proud of that. And it was very, very surprising to me. So now I kind of have realized like, oh, this is actually kind of a good thing for us. It's also strengthened us as a family. The kids are getting better and better at it. Everyone's getting more efficient. Of course, there was a bit of a learning curve in the beginning there, and there was a bit of realizing how poorly a lot of things had been maintained, kind of like surface level things looked okay when you looked under the hood.

[00:14:19] It was like, oh my goodness gracious. This has not been dealt with in years, things like that. Because again, I wasn't doing what was really required to manage that person to really be on top of their work, checking it and making sure that it was done right. And what I realized was I just didn't want to do that. I was like, I don't want to be having to do that. I already do a lot of people managing in my work. I am, of course, a parent and I just didn't want to do that. So for now, we just aren't getting that help. So

we are grocery shopping, we are cooking, we are doing our own laundry, but everybody is spreading it.

So I just want to say like the work is spread out, it is not all on me. If it were all on me, there is no way that this would work. So I just want to put that out there. Like, again, you have to factor in your own personal situation. I'll also say that I do not have the largest house. It is not a small house and some sometimes I'm like, man, I wish we did have a smaller house, easier to clean, but I do not have like a massive house. Like if our house was 2 or 3 times the size, it would probably be a lot more prohibitive to do that. So that's my point in saying, like, you just need to look at like, what is it that you want done? Like, I don't mind cooking.

[00:15:36] I don't mind even doing laundry. I just don't want to do five people's worth of laundry. I don't mind going grocery shopping, and I don't even actually mind cleaning. I just don't want to clean the entire house by myself. So when everybody is helping, it's actually something easy that I don't feel like I need to delegate out. But I'll tell you what I don't ever want to do, and that is yardwork. I do not enjoy it. I did it for years. I don't like it, but other people love gardening so much. It's their favorite thing. They would never want to delegate that out.

You see what I'm saying here? So it really comes down to what do you enjoy doing or what do you not mind doing? Maybe it's not like your idea of a good time, but it doesn't really bother you. So many people say I hate grocery shopping. I'm like, I don't know, it just doesn't bother me. I like kind of seeing what they have in the produce section and it's fine. It's really just not a big deal for me. So if that's the case and you're fine doing that, maybe there's some other things that you would like to delegate out. It could be that going through your email inbox is like absolute torture and you need some help with that.

[00:16:35] So I think a lot of doctors are really familiar with like cleaning, laundry, landscaping, help, child care, help, all of that kind of stuff. But there's other ways that you can be supported when you really need to. And I think again, like for some people, they may just need a little bit of help. Some people may need a lot more help. And luckily there's lots and lots of options in between. So I actually want to start off first with talking about having a scribe. If you are very much clinic based, and this is something

that I've talked to clients about over the years, a little bit here and there, and I think having a scribe is kind of more and more accepted, and there's lots of data now showing how helpful it is to have a scribe.

But what I found is that there are definitely are employers who will not pay for it. So they'll say to the physician, the physician says, hey, it would really help me and this practice if I had a scribe and they say, yeah, we're not going to pay for it. You would have to pay for it out of your compensation. And that is often kind of a nonstarter for people. That's just kind of where the conversation gets shut off. What I want to do is just have you consider it a little bit more. I just want to encourage the open mindedness of even if you had to pay for it yourself, could it be? Really, really helpful for you.

[00:18:02] So I did a little googling, a little researching here to find out what specifically they're helping you with so that you might be like, I kind of know what a scribe does. Like, I just wanted to make sure that you really know, but also what data true data shows having a scribe does for you. So really, a scribe is not making any decisions. Okay, so they are basically doing data entry and charting for you. So many times the scribe is in the clinic room with you.

If you're hospital based, they would be, you know, following you around basically with a computer. And so they are doing the charting while you are asking questions, taking the history. And then you can say out loud what you're finding for the physical exam. And they're charting all of that. And any data entry that needs to be put in any just information that needs to go into the patient chart. So that's really what they're doing. It doesn't sound like a lot when I say it like that. But really what scribes have shown to do is to decrease wait times. So if you're somebody who's behind a lot, it really could help you to tighten up that to be a little bit more prompt and on time increases patient satisfaction.

[00:19:12] I think that's what a lot of people are concerned about is like, the patient will totally be they won't like it, but it increases patient satisfaction. And particularly for people who are in private practice, it can increase revenue, which makes sense if you're compensated for the number of patients that you see and you're able to fit more people in in a day because you're more efficient, then amazing. But there are a couple things that was interesting when I was researching this that they didn't mention, and I was like,



it's just such a testament to the way people think these days that they are just ignoring this part of it, like ignoring the wellness piece of it.

And that is that if you have a scribe, then you're going to have less charting to do at home. So if you struggle with having to chart at home, staying up late, dreading the charts, eating or drinking while you're charting to try to get through it, that could be over by hiring a scribe. Okay, you could just get home earlier. Like you could not work at night and get home on time and have it just all be done. Now again, do subscribe. Have to be trained, yes. But also it can help you to practice being a little bit more okay with, as we call it, B minus work. Like does everything have to be written by you, entered by you? Maybe not something to consider, right.

[00:20:30] And then I actually found something like how much time does a scribe really save you? So this was a published study on cardiologists okay. Who are clinic based. And this study showed that the scribes saved the individual cardiologist one and a quarter to four hours per day. That is really pretty incredible if you think about it. Right, freeing up a little over an hour to four hours per day of your life. Think about what you could do with that. One of the main concerns that the person and some other people wrote in about it to what they said was like, how do I find time to do this work on myself so I can stop overeating?

I get it that it's a mindset thing. I get it that I have to work on my mind. When am I going to do that well. Here's an hour and a quarter to four hours of your day handed right back to you. So very, very interesting. And I think what I want to really encourage you to do is to open your mind up to just finding out more, rather than telling yourself it's not going to work. Rather than telling yourself, well, then they're full time and I have to offer benefits. And this and the other thing, maybe you don't often scribes are medical students or people. Maybe they're not medical students, but people who want to go into medicine.

[00:21:46] They're students who have the time to do that and are interested. They're focused, they're smart. So like, does that mean that eventually you have to get a new one every year or two? Maybe. But then you get really good at training them up. You have examples for them. You have systems and processes set up. And then there you go. Right. Like, what if you had someone two or three days a week. So it was a part

time thing, like what if it's like the mornings are okay because you catch up during lunch, but the afternoons are what kill you.

And so you have a scribe come and help you in the afternoons, like just opening your mind up to letting your brain solve the problem and try to make it easier. What I notice a lot of doctors doing and just a lot of humans in general, but a lot of doctors is a lot of like and I mean this with like the absolute utmost respect and love. It's a lot of wallowing. It's a lot of like, oh, it's just so bad. It's just so hard. Yeah, okay. We can spend a little time there and then what are you going to do about it? What are we going to do? Let's move forward. Let's figure out a solution. So a scribe might be all that you need to be able to tighten up the work. So that work takes an appropriate amount of time for you.

[00:22:55] And then you go live your personal life. Okay. So that might be all you need. But now let's talk about some other options because this is actually something that. The one person specifically asked about. And I think it is something that a lot of doctors are using, but maybe isn't talked about quite so much, and that is having some sort of assistant. So typically doctors may have somebody who is like a shared admin kind of person, or maybe like an office manager who can help with some things. But what I'm talking about here is someone who is at least part of the time dedicated to you. And so there's different ways of doing this.

And again, like I encourage you to do your own research, really look into things. You know, I've actually done pretty much the majority of what I'm going to tell you about here in one way shape or another. So do you feel like I have some things to say about it? But when I'm talking about it, just listen for like what would actually help me the most and what makes the most sense. So first let's talk about having what's called a virtual assistant. So a virtual assistant means that they are a real human being. This is not AI, but this is someone who doesn't necessarily live in town by you. And in some cases, this person may be in your country.

[00:24:16] They don't necessarily need to be in your state if you're in the US, but they may be in your country, or they may even be offshore. And I think there's pros and cons to both. But what we're finding more and more is there are a lot of companies who hire these VAs, these virtual assistants and train them up and will help match you with someone. And then if it's not a good fit, they'll find you somebody else or say that

person transitions out to do something else, then they'll find you right away their replacement. But the Vas themselves then have some support from that company, and then you're just paying the company for the service.

So there's pros and cons to doing it that way. Also, you can just find somebody. There are plenty of people who are virtual assistants who have their own company, and you hire them. Now, you do not have to hire them full time. In fact, the majority of virtual assistants actually have multiple clients at the same time. And so what you typically would do is you would hire them for a certain number of hours per unit of time. So maybe it's ten hours a month, maybe it's ten hours a week, maybe it is two hours a week. Like it really doesn't have to be a lot all the way up to full time. I would venture to guess that you probably do not need a full time virtual assistant.

[00:25:34] And what's nice about it being part time then in a contractor type of a way is it just becomes like a budget line item. So you can count on like, I get ten hours every week with this person and this is the hourly rate. And so I just know how much that helps me, how much I'm able to do with that. Now, typically a virtual assistant is going to be relatively to very tech savvy. And it kind of depends. Someone who is newer to this will be less expensive. Somebody who has more experience and can do more will be more expensive.

Now you'll find most virtual assistant agencies are talking about helping people who work in businesses or run their own company or things like that. And so you might be thinking, well, but that's not me. I mean, maybe it is you, maybe you do run your own practice, but but if it's not, I want you to consider that you actually are running your own business in the sense that, like your life and your work in and of itself is a little mini business. Like there's things that need to be done. The trains need to run on time or things start to fall apart, just like in any kind of a company. And there, like I said, there are many, many people out there who do this for people's like personal lives.

[00:26:49] So here's some ideas of things that a virtual assistant can help you with so they can help you with email management. And I don't know about you, I feel like I was always really pretty good about my email until about like the last year or two. Suddenly email started feeling a lot harder and I am pretty ruthless at unsubscribing to things and stuff. But between like the personal stuff and the work stuff and like it just started to feel

like a lot and I would just let a lot of things sit in the inbox instead of managing them. And so an assistant can really help with that. Like with training, obviously you have to teach them what you want, but with training they can help to manage some of that stuff.

Flagging things for you that need your attention, reminding you about things if you need it. Sometimes I feel like I just sort of like need to talk it out with like a human, like anybody. And so, I mean, I meet with my assistant virtually, even though she is in town, I meet with her virtually for 30 minutes about once a week, and we talk through some things that we have pending that she has for me, sometimes I have some things for her, and the rest of the time we're just communicating online. So just as an additional little idea, this has worked really well for my assistant and me is we actually use a program called front.

[00:28:02] So I think it's front App.com I. Believe is how you can look it up. And it's really meant for companies who have like a group company inbox and multiple people answering those questions and answering those emails. And so it allows people to communicate sort of behind the scenes, but within the email program. So I still am using my Gmail. It just pulls into this app, like your work email address, any of those you're not changing your email address at all. It just pulls it into this app. And then what's really cool is within the app we can communicate about certain emails.

So for instance, say something comes in and like say I'm speaking at something and we need to plan my travel around it. She will just know I'm going to need travel and she will go research what the options are for flights and hotel or whatever it is, and then in the same kind of field where the email lives, she puts all that information. So it's all there. So we're not sending emails back and forth. We don't have these like long email threads. It's like really tidy way of doing it. I super love it. It's been very, very great for us. There's also a way to just even send messages are called discussions and you can just have messages back and forth about stuff and that works super well for us as well.

[00:29:18] So I mean email for certain people. It can be a lot. Now I will also tell you, with three kids who are involved and have all their thing, like the volume of emails that come in for the different activities and school and everything, it can really be a lot. And so she will read through all that stuff, the weekly newsletters from school and ask me like, hey, are the kids going to do this? Or let me know if they're going to do that, I'll sign

them up. Like she just helps to facilitate stuff like things that I often like, want to do, but I just haven't had a chance.

And if I'm like, oh yeah, you know, let me ask that kid if they want to do that and then I forget or I don't follow up or whatever, then she'll gently nudge me, hey, what did you want to do on this? The deadlines coming up. Right. So those are some things where she just really helps to facilitate. So email management, calendar and schedule management is the next thing. So that kind of goes hand in hand with emails like things come in through emails, things that need to be put up on the calendar and the calendar needs to be maintained. Schedule management can actually be really valuable as well, depending on what you have going on. If you feel like certain things really like eat up your time or you just don't have good protected time again, depending on whether this seems like it would make sense, you can have her be the gatekeeper.

[00:30:32] So for instance, like an email comes in asking for a meeting. If she's looking at your calendar and she knows what your priorities are and that you really need a block of time, because that grant's going to be due soon, and you need some time to be able to write that she will protect that time and help you to figure out a solution of either saying no to that meeting, booking it for a time after that deadline is done. Like and I say she but there are male VAs as well.

They can really, really help you with protecting that time so that you do have the time that you want. It's like in force. I think of it as a gatekeeper. I told my assistant a few years ago, she's got three sons. And I said to her, I want you to think of this calendar like, I want you to defend it like it's like your children's lives are on the line. Like that's how protective of this you are. Like, there's no like, well, I just felt bad, so I double booked them on here for this thing. No, that is not how this is going to work. Like, this person needs to be the person who really is holding you accountable for what you've said you want and helping to facilitate that, making that happen.

[00:31:40] So that can be very helpful. A virtual assistant can do a lot of research for you. There's certain things I mean, think of anything you need to look into. You just need to learn more online. You need to find out more about any number of things they can. Go do some of that preliminary research for you, or you can tell them, I'm looking for this information and that information. They can pull that together for you so you can start

making decisions, just kind of moving things along for you. Booking travel is another thing that a lot of assistants do. I would say that I do some and my assistant does some because sometimes I just need to see what's available.

And then I'm looking and I'm like, well, I'm right here. I might as well just book it. I mean, it takes me two seconds. By the time I tell her she books it, I might as well just book it. So it's not too big of a deal either way. But she absolutely will do that for us. And then she also puts like, she'll compile all the travel documents into a free app. I think it's still free called Tripit. And what's really cool then is if I have a trip coming up, whether I booked it or she booked it, she has everything in there, all the support of documents, everything that I would need for that whole entire trip, including like when the dog is getting boarded and like all that stuff.

[00:32:44] She puts it all in there and anticipates things that we may need and double checks that are passport is all set, and all those things make sure it's all good. And then she can share that travel itinerary with anybody else who's traveling. So that means that other people who are also traveling can see all of that stuff. That is a huge time saver. It's amazing. Communication, just general communication, like sharing information like outbound anywhere outside of your life. And that could be like family and friends.

That could be outward, like to colleagues work things. It's totally appropriate to have someone these are professional assistants, totally appropriate to have someone help with that kind of thing. So like I said, a virtual assistant typically is not in town. But they could be. But a virtual assistant is not going to be someone typically who's going to like, come over to your house and like take your dry cleaning in for you. Right. So virtual assistants really just going to be doing more of like the digital type stuff, like the things that are going to be more computer based in general. Okay. Now then there are personal assistants or executive assistants. So my assistant works full time, but I own a company. And so she actually has significant responsibilities within the company that are not just assisting me.

[00:34:01] So that's why it makes sense for me to have an executive assistant who works full time for the company. A big chunk of her job is assisting me, but she also has other responsibilities. If she had no other responsibilities, I would not need a full time assistant. There's just there's just not enough to do so. A lot of people actually really like

having that kind of like part time work. Or it could be that you really do have enough going on that it is really full time. So where you live is going to make a big difference in terms of what's available to you in terms of in-town help.

So I live in a medium sized city, and sometimes when I've gone through search processes and stuff, they're kind of like, if you lived in New York, if you lived in LA, in Dallas, in Atlanta, Chicago, like, there's so many more options. But where I live is just like not as many people who are doing that. But it could be that there's a glut of people where you live who want jobs like this. Or it could be that there's nobody because you live in a really rural environment. So in that case, maybe a VA, a virtual assistant would be better. I think a virtual assistant combined with like one of the task, I think it's called TaskRabbit or like some of the people that you can hire for just sort of one off jobs, maybe in combination, that can be exactly what you need.

[00:35:11] So let's just talk about, though, about what someone who's in town can do for you and see if that's something that kind of resonates with you, or you're like, oh yeah, that's what I need help with. So they can help with errands, right? Returns dry cleaning to and from picking things up. If you ordered something, it needs to be picked up, like dropping off donations, things like that. That's a very typical thing. Often a personal assistant would not be somebody who would be doing like your full on grocery shopping unless you gave them a list and trained them on how to pick the strawberries you want, or whatever it is.

You have to teach them to get what the things are that you want. Now, other people might be like, yeah, I use Instacart for that. I don't need that. Whereas other people may want to kind of combine all that. You may be using a bunch of like little services here and there and you'd like more one person who learns how you like it and then they can do that, but typically they're not going to come in and like put together a meal plan for you typically. Most likely. And that's what I want to say is like each assistant, each person is going to come with their individual strengths, experience, interests, things that they're kind of better at than maybe other things.

[00:36:21] So it's important that you get clear on, like, what are really the things that are most important to you, making sure that this person has experience or expertise in that area. And then the other things might just be kind of like a fun additional, okay, selling

items on Craigslist or Facebook Marketplace, you have things you're like, I don't really want to donate it, but I need to find the time to like, deal with, like the back and forth and getting the things sold. That's a great thing for an assistant to do. Any kind of billing issues, disputes, things like that. You need to call the health insurance company. You need to call the credit card company about this one thing or the other thing to do these kinds of things, there needs to be trust.

This is not something that like day one, week one, you're having your assistant do for you because they're like digging into your personal stuff. But particularly when you have a professional person or someone that you spend time with over the course of the time, you build up that trust and become something that you may want to let them do. If you do any kind of like holiday cards you need help with, like birthday and anniversary gifts and cards like keeping track of those things, they can be the one who's like three weeks ahead going, hey, so and so's birthday is coming up.

[00:37:26] It's a milestone one this year. I know you had said you were interested in whatever, now would be the time to do that. That can be very, very helpful as well. If you need somebody to be in your home, receiving packages, receiving deliveries, things like that, that can be great to have with an in-town person. And actually the holiday cards and the all the other gifts and stuff. A virtual assistant could maybe do that too. Just helping with that may not always be like their biggest strength, particularly if they're maybe in the Philippines or in India, or like in other places.

That may not be something that maybe makes the most sense to have them do, but maybe it does. It totally depends on the person coordinating and being present for home repairs and workers. So, you know, how often is that an issue? It's like I need the chimney repair people to come, but someone needs to be there to receive them. And you work full time outside of the home. How do you do that? Or maybe, you know, you ask a relative to come most of the time, but that's not working out because that person is ill right now or whatever it is like. Sometimes we need help and that's a great thing that somebody can do. And that way you let your assistant know these are the issues, these are my questions.

[00:38:33] And then they handle the the whole thing helping you go through your mail. That may be something that's a problem for you. Maybe not like just somebody to go



through, pull out all the junk that you don't need and pulling out the things that you do need for you. Some of them might be able to help you with decluttering. And this is like for home or office even basically some organization. It may not be that they necessarily are like the decluttering organizational expert, but sometimes just doing that work with somebody else who can be that set of hands when you're like, yep, we're going to get rid of this.

And then they grab it and move it out of the way and they bag it up or box it up. And then they put it in their car to take to the donation center or coordinate the pickup for the donations, things like that. That can be very, very helpful. It really helped to like, facilitate how it's all done or like you've decluttered everything and now you're like, okay, I need a couple organizational tools. Like you put that order in at the Container Store and then or wherever you get it from target or whatever, and then they can get that all set up. If you tell them exactly how you want it, they can do what's considered like concierge services.

[00:39:39] So things like reserving tickets for you, booking restaurants, scheduling classes, canceling things if needed. I've definitely used my assistant when I found out that some concert tickets that I wanted to go on sale at 10 a.m. and I'm coaching at 10 a.m. that day, like there's no way I'm gonna be able to do that, and then she'll get on and do it for me. So that's very, very helpful. Ultimately, what you want to make sure that they're doing is setting up systems and processes so that if you need to replace them, whether they leave or you need to let them go, you can personally follow those systems and processes until you bring someone new on, and then you train someone else on it.

Right? It's like if you have a really great system, then you want to continue that system with a new person. So it's important that that's all set up and documented and it's like a pretty seamless handover if that's needed. Those are a lot of more like in-town things, like people who are like there with you. Ultimately, they might also even be able to do some like project management types of things, helping you with some decision making on things, tracking deadlines. You know, if you are like busy planning an adult child's wedding or whatever, like they potentially could help you with a lot, a lot, a lot of those things. So where do you find these people? The first thing I would suggest is a Google search or maybe multiple Google searches.

[00:41:01] Another thing you might want to do is just ask around. I know that there's definitely online communities where you could definitely ask around, or just asking around the local people, other local doctors or professionals and seeing who they're using what they know about all of it. If you are wanting someone who is local, then I suggest, and this is from experience, I suggest using an agency to find that assistant. So I did that and I'm really, really glad that I did, because I was creating a new position and the agency kind of, to a certain extent knew what I needed more than I did, and not that I didn't need to tell them what specifically I needed help with, but they really knew what to look for because they do this all the time.

And so I would suggest at least talking to them about it. It is a little bit more of an upfront cost, but the key thing with an assistant is that you want the person to be someone who you can have a long term relationship most of the time. Now, it could be that you're like, no, I don't really care. And if it's a college student and I need to replace them in another year, like it's not a big deal to me. Then online services, even like Care.com or places like that can be really helpful.

[00:42:12] But you might want to talk to an agency just to find out if that is what you want. I found the agency experience to be similar to what it felt like when I used a nanny agency a few times over the years when I needed nannies, in that sense that they know where to post the positions, they really know how to write up the job description, and then they usually will support you in the onboarding. If you're having any problems, they'll help assist with that because they really want it to work out.

And then if none of those are in the picture for you or an option, you may want to consider utilizing your network. Maybe you have a family member, or your best friend's sister could use a little extra money. And she's super organized and she wants to work a little bit part time with helping with things like that would be something to explore. I would say that it just kind of depends what you're looking for and whether you want to train the person up or whether you want them to come already having experience. I think both can be fine. A lot of it just comes down to what your needs are, expectations and things like that. The thing you have to remember is that people cannot read your mind. You have to tell them. You have to give them feedback when they do things that you would prefer.

[00:43:25] They didn't do like that. The answer is not, oh well, now I'll take it back and I'll just do it myself. Like you have to actually give them feedback and tell them, no, I didn't like that. And that way that you acted was unprofessional. This is something that I have learned in the last several years to become, when I say more comfortable with it doesn't mean that I'm comfortable with it, but I'm less uncomfortable with it. Where before I was so uncomfortable I could not bring myself to say anything and then I would just stew inside and get mad.

Now I'm willing to actually say, hey, yeah, we're not going to do it that way, or I see you did it that way, but you know, it needs to be this way instead. Again, it doesn't mean that you have to be rude or mean. Helping people to do their job well is actually a gift to them, and they're only going to know how to do their job well if you tell them, right? Like very often, many of us take any kind of feedback. If we receive it as criticism, then we don't want to be criticizing other people when that is not actually what feedback is, and it helps people to really do their best. Okay, so here are some tips. I kind of mentioned this, but I'm going to say it again you really must invest in whoever you have helping you.

[00:44:36] So if you're like, I'm going to have this person do this and this person do that and that person do that, you may find that your life becomes more complicated managing all these people then it would be if you just did the tasks yourself. So you want to be real careful that you don't like over delegate out so that you have a whole lot of balls up in the air just with the people that you're managing. What I noticed with the cleaning was that I actually felt so much more at peace in my own home. I was shocked about this. Now I also work from home full time, and I didn't realize how much having someone in my home was kind of on my nerves, you know what I mean?

Like, I mean, I kind of knew it, but like, once that person wasn't here anymore, I was just like, oh my gosh, this is an absolute dream. And so trading off the ability to have some solitude for cleaning my own home. Yeah, right now it makes sense. And of course, I reserve the right to change my mind and I will change it at some point if I want to. But for now, this is what we're doing. So it takes time to invest in these people. It takes time to build up that trust, and it requires you to give feedback and to honestly tell them what you think and what you need and let them help you.

[00:45:52] Okay. I would also say, though, that if it's not a good fit, right, if there are a couple of red flags, you're kind of like, I don't know about this. I would really encourage you to honor that and just switch it up earlier than later. What you don't want to do is spend several years trying to train somebody up to just end up in the same place, like if there's no improvement, right? If it's like you're having to repeat yourself again and again on the same things, this is not going to work and just transition, find somebody else or rethink it out. So like I mentioned, you must give feedback.

You must also give praise. And this is something that a lot of us are not so great at. We're kind of like, if you did it well, then why do I have to say something about it? It's kind of like parenting. It's the same thing. It's like you also want to give positive feedback on a job well done. When they're doing things you want them to do, you want to let them know that that was good. We all like to know that we're on the right track, that we're where we need to be. Being available to them is an important thing. If you're really like, I cannot be available to dealing with anybody else's like days off vacation, family emergencies, health problems, any of that stuff, then having someone like in your home or in town, it may not be the right thing.

[00:47:06] Maybe a virtual person through an agency is the right thing to do because they set up the systems and processes, and then if that person can't be there, they give you somebody else and makes it simpler for you. Maybe that's an option, right? And then ultimately, finally, my advice is to just remember that these people are humans and we want to always treat them with care and respect. There are many people I don't think that's going to be you or people listening to this podcast, but it's worth mentioning that assistants can be treated very, very poorly or really just.

Disrespected in terms of how they're asked to work. But at the same time, like if you are interviewing somebody and they want to work 9 to 5 and you're also working 9 to 5, and you need to be able to talk to them before work and after work, that's not going to be a good option, right? Like you need to be able to communicate, answer their questions, things like that. But if you're someone who has a day off and then you're texting your assistant Saturday night at 11:30 p.m. because you just thought of something really like respecting them as humans who have their own lives and their own responsibilities, I think is really, really important.

[00:48:19] I make it a general rule to really try not to reach out to my assistant at all after hours, unless it's an absolute emergency, which on occasion it has been. Or I'm like, look, there's this issue and I need help. Or like one time I talked about it a while ago on, on this podcast where I was in Mexico at a retreat, and I woke up and I was like, I don't feel well, I want to get out of here. I tried to do as much as I could from there. Then I realized I needed to call the airlines and it was going to be like a long wait, and I didn't have a good enough connection to do that.

And I thought, no, I need my assistant to do this. So send her a quick text. It was kind of early, just said, hey, I need your help. Let me know when you're online. And that way it wasn't like demanding. You need to drop everything. She has a life and she has children and all of that. Like. But then she knew, oh, okay, so don't dilly dally. Like, once I get online, Katrina needs me. What are we going to be doing today to extricate me? A long story in another podcast. So I really do think it's something to consider. All of these things scribes, virtual assistants, in-town personal or executive assistants.

[00:49:25] I think it can all be very, very helpful. I didn't even mention how they can help with your partner's life and stuff too, if you have one. My assistant doesn't really help too much with my husband's stuff. He doesn't really have so much going on that he can't handle it, but he will. There are some times where I've said, hey, reach out and ask if she can help you with that. So that's a possibility. So it could be if you're super busy and your partner is super busy, like that is largely a full time job for them. There's something to be said for that as well. And then just keeping your mind open to even other forms of help. I'm sure there's things that I didn't even think of we didn't really talk about, like food prep or things like that.

You can find people who can do simple things, people who are looking for a little extra money, who know how to, you know, chop up some vegetables, get a meal started in the Instant Pot for you. Really simply, there are solutions out there. But I would also say that sometimes the simplest thing is just making the stuff yourself and making simple meals. That's kind of what I found is like rather than having to be asked all the time, what, what do you want to have? And do you want this? And I'll make this and that.

[00:50:30] Like, I mean, I'm just like, I'll just make it like I said. And we all think if I had all that help. There were things that were nice about it for sure, but like anything, it had

its pros and cons. So just get really clear. What do you really need and want help with? What would make a huge improvement in your life if that thing went away? That's why I think, like honestly, the charting, having a scribe I think could be the real ticket for a lot of doctors, more so maybe even than the the assistant. And then thinking about simplifying your life in ways that maybe could be beneficial if there's so much going on, it's so busy. Does everything need to have a place in your life?

Maybe we need to start going, hey, you know, I'm going to do a little less of that so I can focus on myself so I can dedicate the time and effort it takes to work on my mind to be able to create permanent weight loss and peace and freedom around food. All right. Well, I am excited for you to think about this. Maybe nothing will change, but knowing that you have options is always really, really good.

So. I hope that you share this with any friends that might need it as well, and I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye. 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.