



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Welcome to the Weight Loss for Busy Physicians podcast. I'm your host, master certified life and weight loss coach, Katrina Ubell, M.D. This is the podcast where busy doctors like you come to learn how to lose weight for the last time by harnessing the power of your mind. If you're looking to overcome your stress, eating and exhaustion and move into freedom around food, you're in the right place. Well. Hello there my friend. Welcome to today's episode. I am really glad you're here with me today. This is a fun episode today on simplicity. I'm really, really excited about this. I've been thinking about it a lot lately. I think it's something that a lot of us are really wanting in our lives.

Feel like it's it's kind of just sort of maybe a collective trend toward this. Maybe you've been feeling it too. Maybe not. But it's something that I wanted to address. So I want to talk to you about leveraging simplicity to create more weight loss results. And I mean, I feel like this is one of those things, like every time I even sometimes I say it, I'm like, well, as you know, doctors are burned out. It's like everyone's like, I know, we know. I feel like it's similar when when I'm like, well, the world is becoming a more complex place. Yeah, we're all aware. We all know. But I do think it's an important thing for us to kind of not just complain about or resist or wish it were different.

[00:01:40] Like, there's ways to work with what is true and what is real and still have the experience that we want to have. And that's really what I want to talk about today. I think a big barrier for a lot of people with food and weight issues and trying to create permanent weight loss and peace and freedom around food is just trying to fit it in. Right. Like, when do you do this? When your life is already pretty packed from eyes open to eyes closed? How are you supposed to figure out a way to do that? And how

are you supposed to continue doing it right? Sometimes we can carve out the time for a period of time.

We prioritize it for a while, and then it just falls by the wayside again. And then there we are again, regaining the weight, repeating the same stuff and same results that we've created in the past that we don't like. So how do we move past that? And so I was doing some research on complexity and just trying to learn more about it. And wow, that was a rabbit hole. I don't know that I super suggest it. It was interesting. The word entropy was brought up. I don't know if that's exactly the way I want to put this. So I really just have one reference quote really that I want to read to you here in just a moment, but that I think helps to describe what I'm talking about.

[00:02:55] It's like the concept of complexity is pretty complex online. Oh imagine that. So I put in I don't know exactly what my search question was, but I basically found an article from 1993, Scientific American, that was a deep dive. And the title of this article is Why do things become more Complex? Think about that. Like there are a lot of things that have gotten easier in our lives. And. Hand in hand. With that ease has come complexity. So this is their answer. This is a whole article, but they're just like the one sentence that answers the question says complexity tends to increase as functions and modifications are added to a system to break through limitations, handle exceptional circumstances, or adapt to a world itself more complex.

So basically what it's saying is like everything will just naturally, over time, become more complex. And so periodically we are invited to deconstruct it. And rebuild it in a simpler way. The prime example I thought to myself was decluttering your home. There is no world where you can live. You know, for 30 years in a home and not have to go through and do some decluttering and some elimination of things. You don't need anymore space for new things that you do need. Like that's just kind of a natural part of living.

[00:04:35] So you might have a closet that you had all nice and orderly and neat. And then over the course of time, you know, the empty spaces on the shelves have gotten filled up with this, that and the other thing, and maybe some things that you thought you were going to use or you used to use are still sitting there, but you haven't really realized, oh, I don't use that anymore. If you've maybe you've forgotten what it even is, maybe some things have worn out and you haven't removed them yet.

Maybe things are kind of out of style, or you're just not really wearing that kind of stuff anymore. Like over the course of time, there has to be a culling, you know, you have to go through and declutter. And so similar, I think, to cleaning a home. You know, I talked about that on a couple episodes ago. It's like house just is gonna get dirty. There's just nothing you can do about it. It just will. You can be the tidiest and cleanest person, and it still is going to require that one thing. I was thinking of a system and a process that have become more complex over time is listening to music. And this is exactly what I was talking about, is like, as we get new great things in our lives, the complexity often really gets a lot more difficult.

[00:05:47] So when I was born, we had a record player, you know, good old vinyl, and it was so easy to learn how to play a record that I was a young, young child and knew how to play a record. I think I even had like a Fisher-Price toy record player that had little plastic records that you put on, and it would somehow play something. And so that was really pretty simple, right? Pretty simple. You put the needle on and it plays the music. Everything was hardwired in and it was something that would work. And then, you know, gradually we got cassette tapes and then CDs and then it was a little more like, okay, I gotta like find where I have all those stored, and then I gotta load them into the CD player and then make sure that it's flat so it's not skipping.

But you know, the music is a little bit better and, you know, easier to bring with and things like that play in the car. So that was better. So a little bit more complex but also a better result for us. So now I don't know how you listen to your music, but I listen on Spotify for the most part, and I have access to more music than I could ever even dream of listening to so much music. It's incredible. I mean, it's amazing. Think how much time we used to spend going to record stores and buying, you know, looking at everything.

[00:06:59] And should I spend my money on this one or that one? And it was like a whole thing right now it's just all that music is available at my fingertips. Anything I want to play, it's just boom, there it is. Amazing, right? Incredible and sadly pretty complex. Sometimes it's not that easy. You can't find the stuff that you want. Sometimes just getting the proper speaker to connect through Bluetooth is just not working, or your earbuds won't connect. Or as is the case in my home and I still have not figured this out.

Even though we have a family plan, somebody plays something in the home while I'm out listening to something else on my own Spotify account, and they, like, hijack my account and I can't listen to what I want to listen to anymore. Right? There's just innate complexity to it in some ways amazing, in some ways more complex. Another way that I see this is in car vehicle interfaces. You know, it was just like there used to be some buttons and like you had your radio stations dialed in and maybe you had a couple CDs in the car on your visor, you know, that you would put in and you'd listen to those again and again, and it wasn't that hard to adjust the temperature or anything like that. And of recent years, I found interacting with the car and I've driven several different cars so unnecessarily complex.

[00:08:21] My family's, if they're listening, they're like, oh my God, this again? Really this again. It's one of my latest things. I just, I keep joking, I'm like, I'm gonna get a car from the 1990s, and then I'm gonna find one that I super love, and then I'm gonna find 2 or 3 more identical to it and put them in storage, and then I'm just going to drive those cars until I die, and that's just going to be it. It's so funny. It's something that of course, I'm trying to adapt to, but it's actually a legitimate problem where the car manufacturers now realize that they've taken it too far, where it's so complex now, it's actually dangerous to people like you're spending so much time trying to touch the screens and figure out how to get to the things so that you can just, like, turn the temperature down a little bit.

Meanwhile, you know, you're not looking at the road. And so that's the same thing. It's like they try to make it like really awesome and give you so many options and try to make it really, really good for you. And in the process make it extra complex. So. My understanding is that a lot of the manufacturers are working on actually reducing that and simplifying it and making it easier because the customers are like, what is happening? That's been my my experience, what is happening.

[00:09:34] So we just have to understand that life naturally becomes complex. And so that's not something to resist. It's something to recognize. And then to also, you know, accept that you have to periodically work to do complexify it right. You have to work to simplify it. You have to take yourself through a bit of a process so that life feels simpler. And I think that the majority of people really, really relish a simpler life. Like a lot of people really feel like, oh my gosh, like I kind of, you know, wish for a time when there

wasn't so many inputs and so many things to keep up with and the pace of life and things like that.

But the good news is that there's a lot that you can do about this, and it doesn't mean that you're living this austere life or, you know, you can't ever be on social media or like any of that kind of stuff, but it does require you to be a little bit more thoughtful. Where I see this coming up, though, is that, again, that complexity creep just keeps always lurking in the background. There's always going to be that creep and not like a person creep, but like the creeping, the verb creep.

There's going to be that creep that takes over. And what I find is that as life gradually, sometimes even kind of like imperceptibly becomes more complex, our efforts at either losing weight or eating in a way that supports us or maintaining our weight loss permanently, those get kind of shoved out, they get crowded out, and then we're left with the complexities of life, not the results that we want.

[00:11:08] So I have a few questions for you to consider, particularly if you're in a place right now where you're like, yeah, okay, I think that's me. I think it's time. Like, I'd like to just think about it like you build things up, just like it said in that quote, right? Like you set up some sort of system and it seems great, but then you have to modify it and you have to make it maybe better talked about in that quote about increasing the functions and modifications.

So as you do that, you need to do that to break through limitations. Right? Maybe there's something that your original system couldn't do. And so you needed to be able to, you know, have it, you know, something else be available to you. So you had to add something on or to handle exceptional circumstances. I mean, life is nothing but exceptional circumstances, right? There's never like ones like, I'm going to wait to lose weight until things just really calm down and, you know, time and space opens up. What whose life is like that help you to understand who has a life where that is their experience.

[00:12:05] That's just not even a thing, right? That's just not how that works. There's always going to be exceptional circumstances that come up. And so we have to learn how to still create the results that we want and maintain them despite the exceptional

circumstances, even when the exceptional circumstances are happening. And then finally, as we adapt to a world that is itself more complex, like that's just happening, and so we respond to it and therefore life becomes more complex.

So I think a great place to start is by asking yourself what your priorities are. And I have to tell you, this is sometimes something when in case you're feeling the same way, sometimes people will ask that like, oh, you have to figure out what your priorities are. And you're like, oh, you know, priorities. But truly, like what is important to you? I think that's sometimes a way to think about it. Like, what do you want to be spending your time doing? It's a really good question to ask yourself, because if your priorities, you know, say your top 3 or 5 priorities are things that you're not spending a lot of time doing, or and it doesn't even necessarily have to be time, but like dedicated effort, energy and focus. Then you're kind of living out of alignment, right? You're putting more energy, effort and focus and probably time on things that are less important to you.

[00:13:22] And that's kind of a recipe for not being very satisfied with how your life is going right. You're doing a lot of things that are lower priority, and not as many things that are higher in priority and more important to you. Over time, that starts to grate on you. That doesn't feel so good. So just even getting back to like, yeah, what is actually important to me in my life, like, what do I want for myself in my life that doesn't have to take you hours to contemplate it, but think about that and maybe jot a few things down, like what is actually important to me.

Then the next question is what in your life feels too complex? And another way of asking it is like what feels excessively complicated right now? Or maybe even just involved, you know, something that used to be pretty simple and now it's like turned into a thing. So what could that be? What in your life just feels like it's a bit too much right now, and you appreciated it for a little bit more simplified. Sometimes what we find is we just need a new kind of like system or process, a new way of doing it. You know, maybe the old way worked for a while and it just doesn't work anymore. And we need to take it all down and start from scratch.

[00:14:30] If we're going to rebuild this process, how would we do it? One way that I kind of think about it is like, how can you make the process a little bit more linear? Like, what's the straightest line between where you are right now and where you want to go?

And so I'm kind of speaking in these generalizations, but I even mean like something that seems very minor, but really is a thing which is just dealing with the mail and packages that come to your home. You do have a process, even if you feel like you don't. You have a system, but the system might be that you leave stuff on your porch for a while, or pile it up inside by the front door.

You know, maybe the mail piles up for a while, or you leave it in the mail slot or the mailbox for a while, and then when you get it, there's just tons and tons of stuff. Then it lays there in a pile until you feel like, oh my gosh, it's a lot like, I probably should go through this stuff. Then you kind of go through it, but there's still another pile of things that you still need to, you know, ask someone about or research or file or do something with. Meanwhile, you know, the stuff is just laying around your house adding up. Maybe things are getting lost despite just like the clutter of it, you know, just having to see that.

[00:15:37] So that is a system. Maybe you don't love the result of the system, but it is a system. So sometimes we just have to go, oh, you know what? I keep bringing it over here when I bring it in. That's not actually the best place because then I forget about it and I don't look at it. Or when I do see it, I'm not in a position to actually go through it and open it. Maybe instead I need to bring it from the front door closer into the house. Maybe I need to put it in the kitchen, right on the counter, and then I can go through it more when I'm waiting for my coffee to brew or, I don't know, I'm just making this up, but you know what I mean?

Like, sometimes we just need to simplify how we're approaching it, and then it's just that much easier to get the result we want, which is to have gone through all the stuff, know what we need to take action on recycling the rest or delegating it to somebody else. So sometimes that idea of just re-envisioning it from start to finish is the simplest thing to do. It's kind of like sometimes with a home, like an old home, you just have to tear it down and start over again. Like there's only so much that you can really do to adjust it before it's time to just start from scratch again.

[00:16:40] And that can be actually invigorating. You know, that can be kind of an exciting thing to, you know, be energized by the simplicity that you just created. And other questions to ask yourself are things like, you know, what can I say no to in my life? Right? Like so we just identified what feels too complex, too complicated, too involved.

So what can you say no to? What can you delegate elsewhere or what can you just not do anymore? You know, there are things you could just stop doing them.

You know, you really could. I give you permission. And, you know, I just did an episode not long ago. I think it was episode 369 on using delegation to Improve Your Life. So if you're interested in learning more about that, I definitely recommend that episode. And I'll say that delegation can simplify things, but sometimes, depending on what it is, it can actually add complexity. I talked about this a little bit on that episode, but if you hire a bunch of people to help you, those people do have to be managed. So they are helping you in doing, you know, arguably taking a lot of things off your plate. But then if you're having to spend now a lot of time managing them. What's the net? How much has it really saved you? If you really find the right people who are super capable and are doing an amazing job and really don't need very much management at all, it totally could be worth it.

[00:17:58] But if you're finding just kind of swapped one time suck for another, we address that again. We think about other solutions to figure that out. Okay, so besides that, I think it can be really helpful to also finally ask yourself what can you reduce or minimize? What can you be doing just less of? Like how do you make something better by removing by subtraction. And this is something that we typically we don't think in this way very often. Like the way we think about things is like we need to add to it. It's addition that creates better things.

But very, very often what makes it better is the removal of things. So I want you to consider thinking about it that way. You know, and I'm talking about like your life as a whole, but even with your work as well. And I do recognize, right, sometimes there's some complexity baked in that you don't have control over. You know, I was just coaching one of my clients recently, and she was talking about how, you know, to be able to refer a patient who needed some follow up used to just be like an easy click, you know, or a quick signature.

[00:19:05] And now it's like all that, plus signing this form and grabbing that form and the other thing, and it's just become innately more complex. So sometimes you have some authority over that and sometimes you really don't. And so the things that we don't have authority over, and that's when we work on acceptance and just trying to be efficient and

things like that. But it would be interesting to open your mind to like, where are there some, you know, inefficiencies here, some, some complexity built in to my day where I do have control.

This is like a very kind of small example, but just to give you an example. So at my old practice when I worked as a pediatrician, when I first started, there was one nurse's station and, I don't know, I think nine rooms, eight rooms, something like that that we all shared. And over time there was an addition put on and a small kind of like a mini nurse's station was added on this interior room as well. And we started to realize, like, it just does not make sense for doctors to be running all over the office, you know, trying to find your nurse over there, and then you're walking from here and walk into there. Over time, it really adds up. It's a lot of time looking for people, you know, it's a lot of time looking for stuff like what we need to do is set it up so that little mini nurse's station services, these three rooms on this one side and the larger nurse's station services all of the other rooms because they're much closer.

[00:20:29] And it just makes more sense. Right. So it's sometimes it's little things like that. And, uh, you know, for a variety of reasons, I think, you know, a couple of weeks ago, I also talked about being sensitive. This is, I think, before I even knew that I was this is something I did that really helped me with kind of overstimulation was I, you know, I was like, hey, when I'm working, I want to be. We called it The Dark Side, which was like the small nurse's station and those three rooms, like it really was just better for me to just not be around everybody else's energy, to just be able to, like, put my head down and do my thing and have, you know, my medical assistant or my nurse who was working with me and just get things done.

That proved to be much more efficient and mentally so much better for me. You know, just in terms of the level of exhaustion and things like that. And then finally I want to talk about weight loss, the whole weight loss process itself, and the complexity that can be built in there. One thing that I notice is, you know, we'll we'll figure out some things that work for us, and particularly those of us who really like learning, you know, like which I think is probably all of us, but some of us just, you know, we really like learning things and trying new things and stuff.

[00:21:35] And when we've been doing something for a while, we're looking for a little novelty, something to spice things up a little bit. And so I'll notice people suddenly, you know, oh, I read this book about this kind of thing with health or weight loss or longevity or whatever.

And now I'm going to try that thing too, and then I'm adding this thing on. And then so and so says you should be exercising in this way. So I'm adding that on too. And it all comes from a good place. And it's all in an effort to create good results. But it ultimately ends up becoming too complex for many people. And then we kind of stop doing all the things right, or we stop focusing on really making sure that the things that really move the needle and really make a difference are non-negotiable.

So I want to offer to you with that as well, thinking about in terms of food and weight and weight loss or maintenance, wherever you're at, where is there some unnecessary complexity that has crept into that? How can you continue to simplify this? How can you make this even easier? One thing that came to mind was, you know, when I was first losing weight, I've, you know, talked before about how I had a whole thing with peanut butter for a while there, and I found, like my favorite peanut butter.

[00:22:43] And it was at Whole Foods. And I don't typically shop at Whole Foods. And it's not really the Whole Foods isn't really like on the way to anything for me. So like, you know, I'll go there occasionally to get whatever, but it's not really like where I'm shopping all the time. But then I was like, but I have to have that peanut butter. Like, that's the peanut butter, which this is kind of an aside. I definitely had some over desire on the peanut butter and had to work on that, which I was able to work through.

And it still, I maintain, I think the best tasting peanut butter out there are one of the best tasting ones, but it added additional complexity because this became something that was an important part of what I was eating on a regular basis. Yet I wasn't shopping there very often, so then I had to find the time to get there, to get that, you know, when are we going? And then, oh my gosh, they're out of it. Shoot, what am I going to do? To me, it was starting to feel like being controlled by food again, which is exactly what I don't want.

[00:23:32] And I think you're the same, right? We just want to be able to just like, flow with it a little bit more like, okay. Yeah. If I happen to be around Whole Foods, sure. I'll pick up some of that peanut butter because I like it. And if I'm not, it doesn't matter because I'll eat these other things. Like there's so many things available to me, it's just not really that important overall. So sometimes it can just be like that. You know, sometimes maybe the plan that you've created for yourself or the plan that you're following, it just has some unnecessary complexity.

Some things that you think have to be done a certain way or it just won't work anymore. I would question that. Is that even true? Because I bet you it's probably not. So this is actually really, really good news. You know, our our willingness to simplify and to do it with, you know, some regularity only makes life easier and better for us. And there's nobody who just has the simple life, you know, unless you're living alone off the grid, you know, in a cottage, I don't know where. Northern Canada, I don't know. And there's probably complexity there as well. You know, I'm sure there is with like getting access to certain materials and goods and services and things. So my point is, if it feels too complex, you're normal.

[00:24:48] That's life. That's what happens. And you have the invitation to create more simplicity any time you want to. It is available to you and it will help you to get the results you want more. What you'll focus on are the things that really make a difference, that actually create the results you want. Whether we're talking about weight loss or other results that you want in your life. Like that's what we want to be focusing on, and it helps us to feel more in charge of our lives. Like we have agency, like we get to choose. Life isn't just happening at us or to us. So it really is a positive thing.

Now before you get yourself overwhelmed, oh my gosh, I need to simplify everything. What's the easiest thing? What's the first thing that really doesn't need that much to it? That's going to make a big difference. Maybe do that thing first, or what's a really, really big goal that you have that you're maybe not making progress on. Maybe that's the first thing to work on finding some simplicity in. All right. Can't wait to hear how you simplify. Things are so good. I love simplicity. It makes me so happy. All right, I hope you have a great rest of your day and your week.

Thank you for joining me and I will talk to you next time. Take care. Ready to start making progress on your weight loss goals? For lots of free help, go to katrinaubellmd.com and click on Free Resources.