



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 podcast. I swear I keep thinking, okay, now the rain has really died down. Now I can start recording and then it rains harder and louder. But this is actually kind of appropriate.

I really do need to record this episode for you today, like now, because I'm actually heading out on a family trip here soon, and we're talking about vacation today on this episode, so it kind of works out perfectly. It's like, well, I need to get it done. So I guess, you know, the dog's also been barking like crazy downstairs. We're gonna do what we can do. We're going to see what happens here. But yeah, I'd like to say that when it's raining because, as you know, I'm in the attic, right? So it's loud when it rains, but when it's raining, just think of this as like one of those, like, meditative rain shower types of audio. So, you know, it's like two for one. You get a podcast and you get to totally chill and relax, maybe at the same time.

[00:01:31] So I want to talk to you today about vacation, but more specifically, what it's like to come home from vacation because something that comes up a lot to ask for. The people I do work with when it comes to eating, because sometimes when we're, you know, we like vacation, we're even off of our people. We're eating this off of our usual, not even necessarily off plan, but the way that we approach it, the it will we are eating is the thing. And, you know, we often will us to think like then I'll get back around and just

like transition right back into like my normal way of eating and my normal life. And then to go that way things start to feel harder.

So say if it was a week of vacation, then you come back and it takes you another week or maybe even longer to sort of get back into the swing of things guy that they were before, a little puffed. So people start to feel really stressed about back start thinking, oh my gosh, like, I've lost all this time. And you know, whatever's happened with weight and it starts to feel like a lot. On top of that, though, it's come up and again and again, even over the years as I've coached women physicians that it's, you know, pretty common for us to come back from vacation kind of feeling worse, you know, like, meaning we're more tired than when we left.

[00:02:49] We might feel more angry when we return, feel like we can feel whole, like you can feel more included and reenter. And it all just is still worse. And we can make you having these thoughts of of why do I ever even, you know, out on vacation in it known it would be this hard to just stayed home you lots of thoughts like that left for having those thoughts when you when I was in practice, when I would come back to my you were on paper charts come back adage just see the head your of the chart might be pretty on my desk what have me I that way for some reason you really I have things to thought and I thought it was a good one.

I thought, you know, I just want to get through these as quickly as possible so I can feel all caught up. And so I did this again and again over the years, where I would just stay late that first day that I came to work, that first evening into the night, I would just stay and I would just get all the phone calls done, and I would review everything, and I would just at least try to make like a very, very significant dent in that pile. And I remember one of my older partners who actually ended up retiring while I was working. I remember him just kind of looking at me once.

[00:03:56] He had a much different, um, kind of demeanor to mine. He was much more chill about everything. He was just like, I give myself at least a week to get through the day. And for me, at the time, I thought it was ridiculous and just completely unacceptable. That was my first thought about it, like I would not do that, but now with more experience and time and then like you might have actually kind of put something

birth. And I wanted to test to ask about that many stories. And I'm sure you see two of their vacation and it just did that really, really tough.

And one thing in particular to remember was and going on a vacation trip, I only one kid at the time and paper was three, and we had put him into an old school thinking that would be, well, good, and if you complete disaster, it was just did not go for that's a story for another time and that's going to we also just doesn't didn't think that surge altitude might bother him. So you might not sleep. So it's my son did not barely sleep at all in a good sleeper. He did not sleep at all for a week. We were is so exhausted like, and won't really come back early so that I could go have to to a full week. Jake Paul at you get that call weeks ago he was literally the worst busiest call weekend I had in the ten and a half years that I practiced.

[00:05:19] That was something that was really, really something I like. Recommend that I want to talk to you today about some ways that you those thoughts could be contributing off difficult reentry for Cap, and how those can be shifted and changed to help. The reentry. And I want to just talk about some actions too. Like sometimes there's just some good things that we can do that can set us up for success. And I think it's it often ends up being kind of a combination of both. Right. We shift our thinking and then maybe we do a couple things that help us smooth that reentry and that transition. And then overall, it can be a better experience.

So. You know, I think one of the things that's difficult about vacation is what our expectations are of it, even going into it. So [00:06:08] if you have been struggling at work, if you haven't enjoyed being there, if it's been difficult for you, it's been a difficult experience and you're looking forward to vacation. You're thinking, oh my gosh, this is going to be so great, I'm gonna have a break. I'm going to feel so good. It's going to be amazing. I'm going to sleep. I'm gonna rest. I'm gonna whatever it is that you're doing. A lot of the time when we really are thinking about what that vacation is going to be, it's like no human being could experience a vacation like that. [00:06:35]

You know? Like the reality of vacation is that hopefully you have some good times and hopefully there's some fun. Hopefully there's some rest. Hopefully there's some relaxation. Or maybe it's like an, you know, an adventure trip or something and you go see cool stuff and you go see Beautiful Nature because you're hiking or whatever it may

be. Hopefully you have some good positive experiences, but often it's not like the really super shiny, polished version that we had in our minds. [00:07:05]

So sometimes we come back and we're like, shoot, I thought I would feel better than I do just because I thought it would be more rejuvenating, more restorative. Sometimes I kind of laugh or joke. It's like I kind of thought I wouldn't be a human being anymore. You know what I mean by that is we kind of forget that I am still a human in this world. You know, there's still going to be ups and downs. Travel is still going to be tiring. There's still going to be, you know, challenges that come up and flights that are delayed. And, you know, there's still going to be those normal ups and downs of living life and sometimes arguably even more so, like when your luggage gets lost or delayed or, you know, just all the things that can come along with travel. So I think that recognizing that and that we need to not be excited for the trip, it's not that so much.

[00:07:58] It's more just recognizing this is going to be really cool. I'm going to really enjoy myself. I'm excited to see how it all plays out, and I know there's going to be ups and downs to that way. If it's not perfect, when it's not perfect, you're not feeling like you totally got sold a bill of goods. Like what? Oh my gosh, this was like, oh, you know, you know, you're like, yeah, this is how it goes. Some vacations are better than others. You know, like one year we took a another ski trip vacation. And my daughter, how old was she at the time? Maybe six. Something like that.

She got a stomach bug on the way there. Literally. We arrived and she was not feeling well. And then she was sick the entire week. And after the first night she gave it to me. So the two of us were sick in the condo the entire week. And that was our vacation. You know, it's like, that's how it happens sometimes. What can you do? So I do think that. Again, not dampening, not like looking at it like I don't want to get my hopes up. Nothing like that. But instead thinking about it like I'm excited for the cool things that are going to happen, and I'm gonna be here for the ups and downs of it all. If there's some downs, I'm going to know.

[00:09:14] Yeah, that's what happens sometimes. That's how it is. Then you have the trip or the vacation or the time off. And when you come back. Your thoughts have a big impact on your experience. So when we're feeling worse, you know, we step into work for the first time and then, you know, work is still work and you start feeling angrier.

That's when we start, you know, having thoughts like that are not helpful. Let's just say so when you have thoughts where you're immediately annoyed, like, why is everybody still exactly the way that they were when I left?

Or why is this annoying thing still like this? Or maybe you asked some people to do something while you left, and then when you came back, it hadn't been done yet. Or, you know, things like that. Our thoughts can really, really add to that. Many of us, though also, Feodor, we want to come back from vacation. We want to just feel our load completely settled and back in our normal lives. And that's really where the root can fairly often start. Difficult. Like you come back, it's maybe have, you know, a week's worth, go a full family's worth of dirty laundry. If I maybe sand I would and like who knows what else different and to deal with that I mean you might have it's a messy house practice left just trying to get everything together with like, sewing, you know, might have.

[00:10:34] And nothing in your fridge, right. Like your pantry and file cabinets. Everything missing for me. Bear. You might also what you really need in that day and had this might have a thought. I just want things and I to be back to normal. You just want to feel settled again. And I think that it's true that we want that. But often thinking about that makes us feel worse, like we're not really open so much to the reentry period. We're not willing or so willing as we might be able to be to let the reentry period take a little while, like getting home and then turning everything around in two hours, going to bed, and then getting up the next morning as though everything were normal.

Like, that's probably particularly with certain types of lifestyles, like probably not going to be the reality. And then wanting things to be back to normal just makes us feel worse about the way things currently are. So, you know, you come back and you have an inbox just full of notes and charts and labs and images and so much stuff you have to do. Thinking it should be different than that is what makes it feel worse. It's basically resisting. The reality, but then also resisting what's true for you. You know, it's okay if you come back and you're like, yeah, this is a lot. It's pretty overwhelming. We're going to talk about maybe a way to work through that, to make it a little bit more bearable in just a couple minutes, but recognizing like this is difficult.

And yeah, this is what happens when you leave and you take a break, you come back, there's more to work through. There's no need to rush, and it doesn't mean I don't ever need to take time off or, you know, I shouldn't do that. When I resist what is true, when I resist the reality, it will make this experience feel worse. So it may already feel like a lot. And then when you resist it, you're making it feel that much worse. You're like adding to the discomfort, adding to the negative experience. And that's the part that's created by our thinking. Yes, there is the work to do.

Yes there is, you know, digging out. But then the way you think about it massively impacts what your experience is of that. Okay. So I'm not saying that you should not tell yourself the truth. You shouldn't just be like, oh my gosh, I love it when I have, you know, dozens and dozens and dozens of things that I need to go through. But you can tell yourself, you know what? This feels like a lot feel a little overloaded right now. And that's a normal experience when you come back after having been gone for however long. And I'm gonna just figure out a way to work my way through it.

[00:13:19] I'm just going to chip away at it, and I'll get through it all. Like, that's a way that changing your thoughts helps you to know that you're going to be okay, you're going to get through it. And how do you know you're going to? Because you always do. I mean, my pile of charts always went away. Like eventually everything gets caught up again. So we don't have to add pain to the experience by resisting it. So, you know, I want things back to normal. I have to get things back to normal that can make you feel even more overloaded. You just got back from your vacation and now you have to like, scramble like crazy to get everybody unpacked and like all the things and get ready for work, I mean, right, that thought alone is exhausting.

If you did get some rest while you were gone, you probably have lost it with that thought. And another thought, you know, it shouldn't feel like this, right? It shouldn't be this bad. Well, but if it is, then it is, and that's what we've got. So how can we work through it and, you know, not add to the agony of it? One other thought that really creates a lot of pain is I just had a vacation, so I should feel great, or I should be feeling amazing and I'm not. I don't think that that is helpful. Like, we have this expectation that vacation is supposed to make us feel a certain way, and if it doesn't, then we did vacation wrong or something is wrong with us.

And that's really a painful way to think about it. Like we have to decide what is it that we want to get out of that vacation and then remind ourselves that we did get it. I've known people to have an amazing vacation. They come back within an hour, like, oh my God, why did I even go away? And well, they're not remembering that they just had this great experience and that yes, we're back to work. We have to reenter. Can be a little bit of shock to the system again. And that's okay. It can feel hard. It's normal for it to feel hard. So my suggestion is to give yourself one full week to reenter.

You know, it is a big transition coming back. You might have various factors that make it even harder. You might have jet lag. If you are dealing with jet lag. You've got to give yourself some grace in that vacations themselves can be pretty tiring depending on what you're doing. Depending on when your travel plans are, it can be very, very tiring. I found years ago that coming home a day early has really, really worked wonders. We didn't use to do that. We thought, oh, you know, let's try to maximize the vacation as much as we can. And what we find is, you know, you get home and then you have that next day.

[00:16:01] It's just a miracle to be able to get some more rest, unpack, get some laundry started, you know, get some basic groceries in the house, like, just sort of get yourself feeling a little stable before you reenter into the day to day life. That's not always possible. This trip that I'm about to take, we it didn't work out that way. We have to come home on Sunday and then Monday. Here we go. So we do the best we can and we can make adjustments when possible, but it's not always possible. Okay, so from the home front, it's easy to think like I'm gonna, you know, cook ahead and stock all these amazing meals in the freezer and all the da da da da.

I mean, if you can do that, amazing. Go you. But let's just be really realistic. And maybe what we can do is make a little short list for ourselves before we go. Or maybe even on our way out. Like if you have some travel time to be able to just write down what you're going to need and what you're going to need to do when you get back. So it doesn't feel so overwhelming and like you didn't expect it. So just simple things like you're going to need to get some groceries and maybe this is something you just order in, or maybe you just run out to the store quick and just, you know, pick up some basics.

[00:17:13] You might even want to throw together a list if you know what you need. Just just what those basics are. It's easy. When you already have the list, you just go and get it or order it. Getting some laundry going. That might be something that you need to do. You might need to go through the mail and packages. You might need to go through your email. Sometimes that's a bigger dig out, you know, going through all the different messages that have come through and figuring out what needs to be done with what. And, you know, as far as what you're going to eat.

Some people find it really helpful to have the first couple of meals, you know, maybe planned or maybe just kind of loosely, an idea. And what I mean by that is like, maybe you actually do have some meals in the freezer or some easy things in the freezer, and you could just know, like, okay, those first couple of nights we're going to have that. Or it could be like, this is a time when you order takeout from those places that you know are on plan that just, you know, simplify your life that much more. Some people have cleaning service come in while they're gone. I think that's amazing. If you can do that. I haven't really typically done that, but I think that can be fun to come home to like a spick and span house.

And sometimes people even, you know, have a friend or a family member or, you know, hire someone to pick up those groceries and have them in the house so that you have them right when you're getting home. I think those are amazing. If you have that as an opportunity, if you don't, it's also, you know, it's not required by any stretch, but it can just help you to feel like you have what you need and you're able to get off on the right foot, right? When it comes to home, another thing to do is to try to prioritize sleep that first week if at all possible, like just recognizing that there's just a lot going on, a lot of things that are outside of the typical, a lot of adjusting.

And often we don't sleep that great when we're traveling, you know, like, or we're just exhausted from the things that we were doing. So that can really help us to for already coming home down on sleep. And then we're, you know, like trying to do all the other things like get through all the charts and get through the laundry and getting the house back in order. Then we're exhausting ourselves even more. We feel even worse. So honestly, it's like letting the laundry sit for a while is better if it means that you can get caught up on sleep so that your overall general like mental perspective on life is more positive, it's going to make things a lot better.

[00:19:35] Okay, now let's talk about work. So you get back and there's things to do, right? You have a whole list. Now it can be helpful to create some sort of prioritization system. I mean back in my day I would sort of sort things from like who needs phone calls and who, you know, this, that and the other thing and kind of go through those charts like what are the things that need to be done? But even so, what are the things that really need your attention sooner rather than later? And what really doesn't need your attention urgently and making some divisions there? So when you're thinking about giving yourself the whole week to get yourself caught up. Or maybe even longer, depending.

I mean, I think longer than that. It just starts to feel like it's hanging over you. But, you know, depending on, you know, teach their own if that's what you need to do, you totally can do that. But one thing that I think can be really, really helpful is utilizing your support staff. So whether that is, you know, nursing staff or medical assistants or, you know, mid-level provider, you can still use them, utilize them, maybe even just your partners to help you as you are getting yourself caught up. So if there are some phone calls coming in and they were on a patient who the PA saw last week, like maybe you chat it out real quick with the PA and the PA calls them back, you know what I mean? Like you're using the nurses to help streamline things, to help manage expectations with patients who were waiting to hear back from you.

[00:21:04] Potentially. You know, it could be that the way you book your first couple of days back is maybe a little bit lighter to account for, you know, give you some extra time to dig through some things that might be a smart way to approach it. But creating prioritization system I think can be really helpful. Some people use like a red, yellow, green kind of a system, maybe divide it up like this is a Monday issue, a Tuesday issue, a Thursday issue. You know, this is something that really doesn't need to be dealt with urgently at all.

Okay, maybe that's a Friday issue. And then by the time we get to Friday, okay. And that's when we start digging into those things. There's a million other ways you can prioritize, but helping yourself to see you don't have to do everything all at once. Not letting the whole list just weigh on you is very helpful when it comes to your perspective and the way that you think. You can feel a lot more successful when you recognize. I

know these are the things that need to get done today, and then you get those done and then you know you're done rather than thinking, oh my gosh, yeah, I did all those things, but look how much else I also still have to do.

[00:22:04] So let other people help you like they're there. Arguably to create an environment where everybody is supported. So let them help you, okay. And then really try not to come home going straight into call or straight into a week on service or things like that. Again, you know, depending if it's like, you know, some sort of family event or something, you might not have a choice and then you just have to really, really prep and and prepare, you know, think about how to support yourself. Because what we don't want happening is coming in without a plan, totally exhausted, you know, life feeling all in disarray. And then we feel terrible.

And then often we end up asking food to try to help us to feel better, which of course, it doesn't really. We only end up feeling worse. And it can really be a tough spiral to get out of. And so that's really what we want to avoid, right? We want to be able to take time off and go on trips and do things like that and enjoy ourselves. Yet we don't want it to feel like it totally derails us. I mean, I can't even tell you how many times I went on vacation after doing Weight Watchers, and that was totally just the beginning of the weight coming back on again.

[00:23:14] It happens so many times. It was like, I mean, now I can look at it and go, that was pretty predictable at the time. I'm like, no, no, I won't do that. But I had no plan on how to make sure it didn't happen again. So shifting your beliefs about vacation and about how you approach reentry and what that looks like for you can really, really make a big, big difference. You know? Of course, like I said, I gave you some ideas of things you can do, but really ultimately where this starts in creating a smoother reentry after vacation is in how you think and what you believe.

And I really think that [00:23:51] if we're miserable in our day to day lives and we're just kind of living from vacation to vacation, that can be really, really tricky because we are just kind of settling for not feeling great, not enjoying ourselves day to day, when the day to day is really the majority of our experience of our lives. So if you find yourself just going like I am just so miserable here, then we need to start looking at what's going on there, right? We need to start looking at, okay, well, what needs to happen. So that day

to day life can start feeling more pleasant, less something that you need to escape from with vacation and more of something that has its normal ups and downs. [00:24:31]

[00:24:31] [00:24:31]But still, generally speaking, is something that is enjoyable and something that you're pleased with and happy with. [00:24:38] So I'm leaving. Let's see in three days. And, uh, I have not packed. And I'm going to be just totally honest. I'm feeling pretty overwhelmed by it right now. We're taking a trip where we are going to be in kind of a variety of climates and altitudes and different, you know, attire needs. And it feels like a lot. I'm just I'm, I'm, I'm working through it. I think sometimes it's easy to think that, you know, a coach never experiences the same stressors as everyone else. And that is not true.

It's just like thinking like a doctor never gets sick or never struggles with their own health. But it's something that I'm working on as well. And it really inspired this episode. And these are all great things that I'll be looking to utilize as well. Like one thing, because we are coming back on a Sunday is the next day, has purposefully got some protected time in there to be able to kind of deal with whatever needs to be dealt with right when I get back. So these are things that can be modified to suit your life and can really make a big difference. Finally, the last thing I'm going to say is. When you recognize you're in the reentry period, you can stop expecting yourself to be living life like quote unquote normal.

[00:25:57] So in that first week, back when it feels off, when it feels weird, when it feels harder, when you feel more frazzled, you can remind yourself, hey, that's normal. Because this is the reentry period. I'm still in reentry. And that can help to normalize your experience. So you're not resisting it and not thinking that you're doing something wrong or something's wrong with you. It's just a normal part of the experience that we don't typically recognize. So then we think that everyone else has it figured out and doesn't have that experience.

And when we do that, we're doing something wrong. No, that's not how it is. Everyone has that adjustment period going back, and the more that we can talk about it and recognize it and do our best to support ourselves in it, the faster we feel like we move through it. And also time just passes and then everything settles down and we're back to normal again, you know, kind of despite ourselves. So the next time you take a

vacation or you take time away, consider applying some of the things that we talked about today. I think it'll make a really big difference for you. I'm going to end it here.

Thank you so much for your attention being here with me today. Take care and I'll talk to you next time. 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.