



# 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'm really, really glad that you joined me. I do want to ask you something.

As we get going, did you listen to the episode that I published a few weeks ago about litigation with Doctor Gita Pensa? If you have not, I want to just really recommend that you listen to it. I have gotten some feedback from some people that they're like, oh yeah, I didn't listen to that one because I'm not actually being sued right now. And so I don't really need it. Or the kind of magical thinking like, oh, I don't want to listen to it because I don't want to tempt fate. I don't want to bring on some lawsuit. I don't want something bad to happen. Of course, we know that's not actually how that works, but our brains like to think that it is. And what I want to make sure that you understand is that episode is, of course, for people who are working through litigation right now, but it's even more so for people who aren't.

[00:01:30] So please, please, please, please, if you are a physician, please listen to that episode. It's really, really important that you do, even when you're not actively undergoing the litigation process. You'll see why when you listen to it. And I promise you, that's not a thing, that you listen to a podcast about being sued, and then all of a sudden you're going to be sued. Okay. If that were to happen, it was already in the works way before you ever heard of this podcast episode. Okay, that's not really how

that works, but I really wanted to bring it to your attention because it is something that is so important.

I was very excited to have Doctor Pensa on as a guest, and also because this episode was inspired by something she said in that episode. So she mentioned when she was talking about her experience of going through the litigation process, that for a long time she was something that she called help resistant. I hadn't really heard that term so much before, and I know it really resonated with a lot of the physicians that I work with in weight loss for doctors only. And so I've been thinking about that term more, and I decided instead of titling this podcast episode with Overcoming Help Resistance, I decided that's not actually truly what I want to talk to you about today. What I want to talk to you about today is actually weaponized independence, because help resistance is one thing.

[00:02:57] But what I actually see with a lot of people, with a lot of doctors is weaponized independence. So let me explain a little bit more about what I mean by that. First, let me tell you about help resistance. Some people call it resistance to assistance. Some people call it resistance to receiving. But really what it comes down to is you could probably use some help and you're resistant to accepting it. Right? You don't really want anybody to help you. There could be a lot of reasons for that. But when I really thought about what this was all about, particularly when it comes to solving an overeating problem and emotional eating problem, losing weight, keeping it off forever, and creating the relationship that you want to have with food and weight.

Often we cling to this level of independence in a way where we actually do weaponize it, and not typically so much against other people, but we weaponize it against ourselves. Our independence, our fierce clinging to independence, becomes a weapon that we then turn on ourselves. And what I mean by that is there are a lot of people who could really benefit from some assistance, from some help, whether it's from me in weight loss for doctors only or from somebody else. And they are so attached to their independence that they don't actually let themselves get the help that they need, and therefore it's effectively harming them, at least in some ways, at least in holding them back from having the results or the resolution of symptoms, or just the success that they want to have.

[00:04:38] And it becomes this cycle where there's a belief that you have to be so independent that there's no way of doing it, like you can't get help from anybody else, and then that hurts you, makes it even harder to get the help that you need, or to even make any progress on your own. And then when you're not making any progress on your own, then you make that mean negative things about yourself. And then that cycle just is, becomes like a vicious cycle that you can't get out of the kind of idiom that came to mind as I was preparing for this, that I feel like kind of describes best.

What we're talking about here is the idea of cutting off your nose to spite your face. You're so attached and have such a tight grip on that independence, despite it hurting you and honestly, possibly even hurting other people. And I want to be careful in declaring that. But I do think that if you. Particularly if you have children at home or anybody that you have influence over. I think the best example that we can set for others, particularly young people, is what it's like to have a normal, healthy adult relationship with food and with our bodies. And as we know, young people, they pay so much more attention to what we do than what we say.

[00:06:01] And so they do pick up on those things. So when you won't allow yourself to get the help that you need because you're weaponising your independence against yourself, and you continue to struggle and continue to struggle and continue to struggle even when really good help is available for you. Some people may pick up on that, so that may not be the case for everybody. And I certainly would never say that anybody is at fault. For where this often comes up is when a young person develops a eating disorder. People will ask me, has the mother did I create that? Did I cause that because I've struggled so much?

I just I don't know that anybody will ever know. I think it's very multifactorial, and I don't think it's actually productive or helpful to blame ourselves for that, or even to take ownership for that, because there are so many things at play there. But like I said, I think the best thing that we can do is help ourselves to be an example to them of how they can also get help themselves and improve their relationship with food and their bodies and weight as well. That's a little bit of an aside. So I have some different things that I'd like you to think about. If the concept of help, resistance, or weaponized independence resonates with you at all.

Now, I don't think everybody struggles with this by any stretch. There are a lot of people who they know like, hey, if I don't know how to do that and I know someone else does, boom, I am all over it.

[00:07:33] Happy to pay people to help me to get the results that I want. So there are plenty of people who are not struggling with this. But I do think that amongst people in healthcare, in the medical profession, particularly as doctors, there's definitely maybe more so people who are resistant to that. There's this way of thinking or this culture amongst at least some people that can end up preventing them from accepting that help and driving them toward that weaponized independence. So if you find yourself to be resistant to help, if you just find yourself going like I know it's available to me, you know that you can avail yourself of this help, but you are not.

I really want to encourage you to look into why that is. And when I say look into why that is, this is something that you can definitely do on your own. Good thing because your help resistant, sorry life coach joke, but you also could get some help. It's something you could talk out with a friend, with a family member that you trust. You could even talk it out with a coach, right? Or a therapist, of course. But it's ultimately, and I hope that you can understand this on a cognitive level, that it really is not an indulgence to get help from other people who have solutions to the problem that you're struggling with.

[00:08:59] This is actually how society works. It's part of our social experience as humans that if you think about just the exchange of money, even in our economy, some people have needs and some people have solutions and we make that connection. There's an exchange of money, and then everybody theoretically gets what they need. It's obviously a very simplistic way of looking at it or thinking about it, but you catch what I'm trying to say, right? It's this idea that you could also be resistant to any help from the supermarket. You know, you could be like, no, I'm going to grow everything myself.

And you know what? I will just generate all my electricity myself and I will do everything myself. So there are a lot of things that we don't insist on doing ourselves. There are so many things that we are very happy to have others help us with, but we just think about it differently and that is why it feels different. Okay, so in our minds, it makes complete

sense to allow farmers to grow our food for us, and then we give the grocery store our money so that we can have that food. Right. It makes complete sense that we're not going to try to create our own gasoline or electricity, like we're going to let the experts in that do that for us, so that we have the energy that we need to be able to live our lives. Right.

[00:10:17] There's lots of things that we recognize, like if you're building a new house, like you're probably most people at least are not going to be building it themselves. And we don't feel bad about that. We're not like, oh, I should be able to build a house myself, right? We're like, no, I'm going to find someone awesome who's totally an expert at doing that. And I will very happily pay them money to do a great job. So somehow when it comes to food and weight and creating peace and freedom around food, we can think about it in a different way that often doesn't really help us. What's interesting to me is I was thinking about how as doctors, sometimes there are patients that we see who are resistant to help, right?

They don't go to the doctor, they don't follow up, they don't take our advice. And I've seen many, many doctors over the years get pretty frustrated with people like that. Like if you would just do what I told you to do, if you would just come in like, why did you wait until it was this bad or until you were eight months pregnant to come see a doctor or like whatever it may be, thinking like, yeah, why wouldn't you just come in? Well, some of us over here are like, why wouldn't you just get help from a coach to lose weight and keep it off? Like, you know, it's a real similar thing. So I just want to give you that framework because you might have had those thoughts about patients before, and now you kind of understand where I may be coming from in talking to you about this.

[00:11:38] So I want to dig in a little bit more about the emotions beyond this. Right. Because anytime we're doing or not doing anything, it's because of how we feel. And maybe we want to change that feeling. But whatever it is, that feeling drives us to take actions or to take inaction. Because what I also find is when a lot of people say, like they're going to do it themselves, they have that weaponized independence. It's not like they're actually taking a lot of meaningful action on their own.

Or maybe they do, but just sort of in fits. It's in spurts, but never anything that is particularly meaningful or sustainable or long lasting, and that only makes them feel worse about it. So some people follow me on this because this is a little bit more of a, I guess, a little bit more advanced of a subject or a concept. If you're if this is your first episode you're listening to, you might be like, what? What is she talking about? But some of us, maybe not cognitively, maybe also like you, consciously have these thoughts, but maybe more subconsciously, we want to hurt ourselves. We actually don't think that we deserve to have help, right? Like sometimes we believe, well, other people can have help, but I can't.

[00:13:01] Or I could have help, but only if I weren't. So whatever disparaging thing, right? If only I weren't so lazy. If only I weren't so undisciplined. If only I weren't so out of control or gluttonous, if I only I weren't so undeserving of help or whatever it is. That can be a way that a lack of self-esteem, a lack of a positive relationship with ourselves, a lack of a positive self-description. Ends up holding us back, right? We're kind of like, well, I'm just going to confirm that this thing that I believe about myself is true.

By denying myself the help that people who are quote unquote, deserving, right? This is a mental construct. I'm denying myself that help to prove that I really am as bad as I believe I am. Okay, so that's pretty deep, right? Sometimes it's like I'm broken on a deep, foundational, fundamental level. If that's a belief that you have, then it would be in direct conflict with that belief to actually go out, get help and solve the problem. So this is some pretty deep stuff. This might be something that you are like, oh yeah, that sounds about right. Or it might be something that you have some resistance to, or it might be something that you need to noodle on a little bit and just kind of have that marinate in your brain. And I'm not saying this is the case for everybody, but it is for some people.

[00:14:33] Now, some people, when there's the idea of help, like the concept of maybe we'll just use my program as an example, coming into weight loss for doctors only some people go into a bit of like a defensive or a protective mode, right? Some people even get kind of like angry or frustrated or really just very resistant. And what that can be about is being really reluctant to share what's really true for them, because it's just too

vulnerable. Right? Like if I go get help, then I'm going to have to actually look at what the problem is, and that feels too risky. It feels too vulnerable.

For some people, accepting help can feel on some level like a failure on their part. Right? It's like if you need help solving your overeating problem, your emotional eating problem, creating a different relationship with food or with weight, if you need that help, then that must mean that I'm not good enough, that you're not good enough so you resist that help and insist on doing it on your own, when of course, it doesn't have to mean that at all. And what I always find interesting is that for the vast majority of people, they would never make that interpretation about somebody else going and getting help. Right? Like their friend signs up for weight loss for doctors only. They're like brilliant. That's so smart. Go you. I love that for you. It's so good. But then when they think about doing it for themselves, they're like, absolutely not.

[00:15:55] I'm not deserving of that or it'll make me feel like a failure. I should be able to do this on my own. Some people feel that they need to prove themselves or prove their worth, and that's why they have to do it themselves. Like if they go and actually get help, then that somehow means that they're worthless. Some people, and I would say there's a decent number of doctors in this category. Some believe that they're above needing help. It's kind of like this, and I mean this in the most loving way. It's a kind of grandiosity that some doctors really struggle with. It's like if you're above needing the help of others, it can make you feel actually really powerful.

So you're not feeling great about yourself, maybe because of your eating or your weight or whatever. It's like being you around food, but if you can tap into that feeling of grandiosity, then you get to feel powerful and you kind of get to feel better than other people. And that is kind of like a drug for some people. And that can be another reason why some people really resist getting help. And finally, I think that there are a lot of people who, at least on some level, right, like maybe subconsciously they believe that if they ask for help that they might find out that there really is no hope, that they really can't do it, and then they'll feel even worse.

[00:17:25] Right? Then they'll feel totally helpless. They'll feel absolutely like there's no

hope at all, and it's going to feel so bad. So if I just don't even try, then I won't find out that I can't do it. I think that will resonate with at least somebody who's listening to this today. Maybe not you or maybe you, right? So partly I wanted to bring this up because I think it's an interesting thing for us to think about. This is certainly not me coming at you going like so you just need to turn it around and just accept help. I mean, of course I do think that accepting help is a smart thing to do. I think it actually makes a lot of sense. But what I found, what I think I know to be true, is that when people are resistant, when you try to yank them in a different direction, it's typically ineffective.

It's like we have to be ready to be open minded to something else. My hope with bringing this to your attention is for you to think about where you do accept help in your life, where you're resistant to accepting help, and where in some cases, you're so attached to your independence that it may even turn into a weapon at times, particularly or especially against your own self. What I find interesting is a lot of people say, like, I've had such great results with your podcast. It's helped me so much.

[00:18:48] And I'm always like, yeah, and that is just like literally the appetizer, like weight loss for doctors only is really where you get the real help that actually starts moving the needle for you in a long term fashion. But, you know, if you are so attached to your independence and doing it yourself, you wouldn't give yourself the opportunity to be coached and to be helped and to come join that program to actually get that assistance that's going to truly solve the problem. So that's partly why I wanted to bring this to your attention. But I know that for other people, they realize, oh my gosh, like, there's other areas where I'm doing this as well.

So I just want to have you think about this, think about how this may be presenting in your life. And I want you to also think about whether it could be possible that accepting help has nothing actually to do with your value as a person. It's not something that you have to deserve. You don't have to be at a certain point in your life, a certain place with your knowledge. You literally can just do the smart and most efficient thing and just get help. Just be open to it being faster and better and easier than it would be on your own.

There are patients who are like, well, I could read a lot of medical textbooks and I could figure out how to get the medications that I need from offshore pharmacies, and I could do a lot of it myself, like, why would you do that when you have a very well trained and



experienced physician available to you, like, who can absolutely help you? Like not only they have more experience and knowledge than they know how to advise you, but they also can make it go so much smoother and faster and better.

[00:20:34] It's a similar thing like, why would you not want to get help working on utilizing coaching tools to help you with your relationship with food and weight? But of course, also all those tools end up helping you in other areas of your life. I think that's what a lot of people overlook is like the work that we do doesn't just fix the food issue. It's like the food issue is the symptom. And what we do is we get to the underlying source, and that source is often all the other things that are you're still struggling with.

So even if you're having success with medications right now or things like that, you might want to really think about coaching as a bit of an insurance policy, like, okay, so you get those results, how are you going to maintain them? Like, it would be really nice to ensure that you can maintain them. And you can do that by focusing on your mindset. That way, when and if you ever need to stop for any reason, you have so many other tools at your disposal, you're not like, oh shoot, panicking, what am I going to do? The way it's all going to come back? Right? And I'm like, back to square one.

[00:21:39] What do I figure out to do next? So I just want to have you really think about that. Weaponized independence. I think all of us have done it at times to our own detriment. I can think of times where I have to, and I think I tend to be pretty open minded to getting help. So I think all of us can probably identify with this, at least on some level. And I think that there are even sometimes some of us, like we're even theoretically getting help and then were resistant to that help. Right? I know that sometimes there are people that I'm working with in my program who are just very resistant to doing what's recommended, and not to say that everyone has to do everything, or that's not normal, to have doubts and want clarification and want to really think through what makes the most sense for each person as an individual.

That's not what I'm talking about. What I'm talking about is knowing this would be helpful, or at least having a hunch that it would be, and still resisting just not being able to do it. And I don't think that it's as simple as just like, oh, I'm just help resistant.

There's more to it behind that, right? Like if you can stay independent, that somehow protects you emotionally.

[00:22:44] And that's really what we've been talking about today here. So when we can shift the way we think about getting help, that shifts our emotions, it shifts our feelings. So we aren't feeling right, like a failure, like we're not good enough, right? Like we're undeserving. Instead, we shift the way we think about it to something that helps us to feel good about getting help, if maybe even better than good. Delighted. So excited. Guess what? I don't have to figure it all out anymore. Someone else who already did figure it out can help me. Brilliant. So so smart.

All right, my friend. Well, I am excited to have you think about weaponized independence and some help resistance. And like I said, if you do not listen to the litigation episode a few episodes ago, please go and listen to it. I promise you it is worth your time, even if it never helps you. There's a lot in there about supporting other physicians who are going through litigation. It's very important that all of us together shift the culture around this, and you are also an important part of that. So please make sure you listen to it if you haven't already. All right. Thank you so much for your attention. Thanks for joining me. I hope you have a great week. I'll talk to you next time. Bye.

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