



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Well, hello there my friend. Welcome to today's episode. So glad you're here.

It's part three of the Weight Regain series. Today we're going to be talking about preventing future weight regain. So as a little recap, two episodes ago we talked about gaining the weight back. When you've gone through the process of losing weight, only to gain it back. What to do when you find yourself in that position. How to get yourself to a place where you are learning what you need to learn so you can start moving forward. Then last week's episode was about the actual moving forward process. So what do we do when it's time to start losing weight again? Or at least stopping, gaining, doing something, making some sort of adjustment? And then today we're going to be talking about preventing that future weight regain. So let's just say now you've lost that weight again. So what are you going to do now? So we don't repeat that cycle of losing weight, only to regain it again, because that is really what we would like to have happen.

When I talk about permanent weight loss, that's what I'm talking about. Like you lose it and it stays lost. It stays gone. So how can we prevent that future weight regain? That's what we're going to talk about today. I think that a lot of people get tripped up when it comes to weight loss, even though logically I think they understand this. It's like there's a subconscious component that also needs to hear me. And that is the part that thinks that once you get to that goal weight, that you've somehow arrived, like you get the gold star and it's life's going to be so much smoother and better, and it's all going to be easier from here.

And I'm open to it being that way for you. But I'm telling you from experience personally and from coaching, you know, I think we're at over 1700 women physicians I've coached now. I mean, that's not how it goes. And so when we tell ourselves it's going to be like that, and when we approach the maintenance phase from that kind of a place, we really set ourselves up to gain that way back again. So if the previous patterns are that we work hard, we lose that weight – maybe we enjoy that weight loss for a while, or maybe not very long, or maybe it's longer, but for a bit of time. And then the weight comes back again. Whether it's just like a gradual creep or something happens and you go back to overeating to cope with that.

However it happens, if that is the pattern, then we have to change how we're approaching things, because the current way that we've approached maintenance hasn't worked right. So it's not about good or bad. It's just it's not effective. Like something was missing that would help you to maintain that weight loss. So we have to figure out what that is that's missing. We have to figure out how to fill in the cracks, so to speak, bolster that support. That's what I want to talk to you about today, because I just think that it's something that's really overlooked.

It's what a lot of people don't talk about. In general, people are so much more focused on the weight loss component and kind of like, yeah, I'll figure out the maintenance later. Or there's like this little part of us that it's like, again, we know it's not logical, but that we just kind of hope that we're going to lose the weight and then we're going to be cured of the obsession. We're going to be cured from liking food as much as we do. We're going to be cured from not wanting to feel our feelings and wanting to eat them instead. And experience just shows. That's not at all what happens. So can we set ourselves up for success while we're losing weight? Can we make the maintenance process easier by doing work while we're losing weight? Absolutely we can.

And that's a huge thing that we do in the Weight Loss for Doctors Only program. But I do have plenty of people who lose weight on their own or lose weight in other ways. And they come into my program having lost all the weight or the majority of the weight, and they're like, okay, here we are, like, it's time to do this. It's time to actually start working on my mind so that I can maintain these results that I've created. Right? Because there's lots and lots of ways to get the weight off.

But maintenance, there's options there, my friend, I hate to tell you, it's kind of like there are things that work, and those are pretty much the things that work. I mean, this database of people who've lost weight and kept it off for a long time. And there are a lot of things in common with those people and what they do and how they approach this. And we're going to be talking about some of that today. The very first thing that I want to impress upon you to consider and to really like, buy into when it comes to preventing future weight regain, is that it's very important that you keep doing the things that got you to where you are with the weight loss. Now, that's not 100% across the board, always going to have to be the case.

But I mean, more specifically when it comes to the emotional support. The planning, the whatever you do that helps you to get that weight off, it's going to help you to maintain it. If you're really good at checking in with your body and assessing where you are in the hunger scale, and that helps you to not overeat, you would be well advised to continue doing that. That would be really helpful. Now, some people find that there's ways of eating or things that they do that help them to lose weight, and then they want to change that later. And that's totally possible.

We totally can do that. And of course, for people who are using medication, they may be using medication to get the weight off and then plan to wean themselves off the medication. So it's not like you necessarily have to stay on that medication forever. In fact, a lot of people really hope that they don't have to stay on medication forever. But either way, right? Like even so, I have personally witnessed people who are on the medications who are still overeating. Like it's still possible, right? It still is possible. So you want to keep doing what got you to where you are. So this is important because these things start to feel very normal to us, particularly for the people that I work with. We just really incorporate these principles and these activities and these support systems into our lives.

Like integrating it is a huge part of our proven process so that it just feels normal. It's just how you live life. It doesn't feel like this extra thing that you have to do. It's just normal to you. It's just life, right? It's just what you do. And as normal as it feels, that's great. But it also can be a little bit like a double. What is it, a double edged sword? I don't even know. You know what I'm trying to say? It's great that it feels so natural and

normal, but sometimes we end up unintentionally kind of taking it for granted. We start to tell ourselves, hey, you know what?

This actually maybe isn't as important as they think it is. I'm doing so well. I probably don't need all of this. What it reminds me of is like when I would take care of kids who are on prescription acne treatment, and then they'd come in, they're like, my acne is so bad again. After it being really good for a while, I'm like, okay, are you using the medication? No. I stopped taking it because my skin cleared up and it's like, no, you have to keep taking it. That's why your skin cleared up. Let's keep using it so that we can maintain that good clear skin. So it's a similar kind of idea if you are doing certain things that are helpful in terms of stress relief, if you're doing certain things that help you with processing your emotions, you would be well advised to continue doing those things right.

And maybe it doesn't have to be like every single day or everything's going to fall apart. Like, we don't have to hold it with such a tight grip, but we do need to really buy into the idea that these things really are non-negotiables. These are things that are important. What my hope is, is that if you end up missing doing some of those things, you have to stop because of whatever that after maybe a couple of days, you already start feeling like life isn't as good. I can tell I'm off. Something's off. Something's off kilter. I need to get back on track because I feel better.

Life is better. Being me in my life is better when I'm doing these things regularly. So to even notice that requires a certain level of awareness, right? Paying attention. How am I feeling in my life? What's going on for me right now, and where this often comes up is a big stressor will come up in our lives, particularly if it's needing to care for someone else or someone else in our lives is having a crisis of some sort or something like that. Some big things happening we often like. The first thing that we cut is often our self-care. That's the first thing that becomes negotiable.

That's the first thing that we kind of go, oh, you know what? I can hit pause on that. I'll pick that right back up again. You know, we have the best of intentions. We really don't think it'll be a big deal. But again, experience shows, history shows. It often does end up being a big deal. So, you know, we need to figure out how to continue doing those things so that they are not optional. They are things that we make sure we do. We really

prioritize them because, you know, what we do is the things that are important to us. So they need to have a high standing of importance to us in our mind. They can't be at the bottom of the priority list because that's the first thing that gets the ax. So keep doing what got you to where you are.

Does it mean you always have to do every single thing? No. It could be that over the course of time you can kind of take away this and see what happens. It's like if you have a bunch of scaffolding up, you could take down one piece and see, you know, let me see how life is, how are things doing it in an intentional and calculated, informed kind of way where you can pay attention like you're doing it like an experiment. Now I got busy, so that's the first thing I stopped doing.

You know? I mean, like, that's gonna tend to be much more of a difficult thing. The next step is to be open to continued learning from mistakes. So again, the arrival fallacy. We think we're going to get there. We're going to have it all figured out, and we won't have new concerns or new pressures on us, or new challenges when it comes to food and weight. We think we've figured it out. And that, I find, is not a very productive way of thinking about things. Because then the minute that we do have a mistake or the minute something isn't the way we expected or we have to make adjustments, it's very easy to just throw our hands up and like, why is it like this?

It wasn't supposed to be like this and I must be doing something wrong. You know, the whole doom spiral of like, it's all going to fall apart now and oh my gosh, I knew I couldn't do this. All the emotions that go into that. So when we can expect, when we just know, hey, part of the process of maintaining is learning. Continuing to learn, continuing to grow, continuing to figure out new scenarios that are challenging for us. Not looking at it like, well, I have every answer now, so I should never struggle ever again. It's just not realistic. That's just not how it is. So we want to really be aware of that idea that we have it all figured out.

It's great when we're in a good place, we're coasting along, but we can still offer ourselves a little grace if we make a mistake, but then also make sure that we learn from it. So important that we learn and make adjustments, right? Again, we don't have to hold it with such a tight grip, but when we have a super relaxed grip, everything just falls through our fingers. We don't want that to happen.

Recognize that you are probably going to need to change how you eat at some point. This is another thing we often think like, okay, I figured out my way of eating. This is what I'm going to do for the rest of my life. I mean, that could happen, maybe, but probably not. Like, probably. I mean, it's just like if we are just being realistic, like, probably at some point in our lives, we're going to have to make some sort of adjustment. It might be because of a medical need. It might be because of a health need. Maybe your doctor or a dietitian or somebody recommends you change the way that you eat. Maybe you need to make some adjustments based on different intolerances that maybe you develop. Who knows? There's all kinds of reasons. Maybe just the way you're eating right now stops working for you in the sense that it's difficult to follow. It just doesn't work with your life anymore.

There's all kinds of reasons why we might need to change. And so again, when we can expect that, when we know that's going to happen, then when it does happen, we're not freaking out. Oh my gosh, why is this happening? We're like, yeah, I knew a time would come when I'd probably have to make an adjustment. And look, it's here, right? So we don't panic or start thinking something's going wrong. So this is actually a huge thing that we help you with in weight loss for doctors only. We actually have a supplemental resource that's all about changing the way you eat that you have lifetime access to, so that if at any point you're like, oh, I need to change, what do I do?

You just come back into the program, access that module, and we walk you straight through exactly how to do it. So just letting you know that is available there. But ultimately what you want to do is you want to maintain a solutions focused mindset, and you want to build on what you already know works for you. If you already have a plan that you know works, then we don't have to throw everything out, right? We just have to get creative. And we have to recognize that there's not just like one solution. There's so many solutions, so many ways for this to work.

And we just have to figure out one or a couple, you know, if we need to be flexible and we just have to be open to experimenting and seeing what happens, but that we can absolutely figure it out as soon as we start telling ourselves, like, I don't know if I can do this, I don't know if this is going to work.

If I have to follow this way of eating, I'm definitely going to gain a bunch of weight back. I mean, we know how powerful our thoughts are. We know our thoughts always end up in our results. So thinking that is much more likely to create the result of weight regain, which we don't want. So just recognize that you're probably gonna have to make some adjustments. And if and when you do, it's going to be okay. You figured it out the first time. You absolutely can make some tweaks and adjustments and figure out something else for you for this next time. I guess another reason you might want to change is maybe your goals have changed. Maybe you need to adjust, you know, different levels of macronutrients you're eating. Not that we count those in my world, but you know, you just want to have a little more of this, a little less of that or whatever. And you have to make some adjustments. You absolutely can figure that out. Next, get help. When you notice a small amount of weight regain, don't wait until it's all back.

And this is something that I really want to speak to, because what I have noticed is that we will have people who will gain a little weight back, and then they'll start beating themselves up about it, and then they'll feel ashamed that they've done that, and they kind of want to just deny that it's even happening. Our brains are so powerful, right? Denial. So powerful, it's like, ah, it's not really that big of a deal, you know? It's just 10 pounds. Like, I can get that off. I can do it myself. Maybe a couple tries getting it off without success and then the weight just starts really creeping on, and then that shame spiral just worsens.

Feeling worse, feeling guilty. I invested all this. I did all this work and here I am gaining it back and just adding more pain to the pain that already exists. Like just adding insult to injury. I just find that when people notice, hey, you know what? Like all the things that I usually do, that gets me back on track with my eating because it may not even be a weight thing. It could also be just relationship with food. Like there's so much food chatter back. I'm really struggling. The sooner you start getting help again, the easier it is to fix it, or at least to understand what the problem is, and maybe at least halt the weight regain while we work on that problem, while we work through whatever that issue is.

And then we know how to lose weight. So we just get that weight off again. Like, that's not really that big of a deal, but it's like when there's some reason why we were overeating again. And if we don't get help on that, or if we aren't able to work through it

ourselves, we should really get the help that we need, because otherwise it will just continue to result in weight regain. Find the people who come back who've gained it all or more. They just tend to be in a worse headspace, you know? Not that they can't work it out, not that we can't help them with coaching.

And of course we work with them and we can help them get to where they want to be. It's just not something they're very happy about and it just feels harder. So it's like, do yourself a favor. If things start feeling like, oh, things are a little wacky, like start getting help right away, just do yourself that favor and really preserve the work and the results that you've created for yourself. If you feel like the help that is available to you is something that you'd feel judged by that person or that group or whatever, like that's not the right thing for you. Then what I've always said about my program is like, we always want you back.

Like we are never making anything you do with food or weight mean anything negative about you. We're not frustrated with you. We're not tired of discussing the same things over and over again. We want you back because all it means is that there's a little bit more work to do. There's some things that we didn't touch on the first go around, whatever, whenever the last time we worked together. And so it's okay if there's more work that we have to do. That doesn't mean anything negative about you. In fact, it means really a positive thing when you recognize, hey, you know what? This isn't going according to what I would like.

I'm going to take steps to get this sorted. Okay? So just don't wait. And then keep getting life support. Because life is why you gained the weight back in the first place, or even gained weight in the first place. And what I mean by life support is like coaching or therapy or, you know, a very supportive friend group, just those support systems in your life. We know that eating, overeating, gaining weight is not just because you like food. You know what I mean? It's not because you're a foodie. It's not that there's other things at play there. There's things that happen in your life. There's experiences that you're having. There's emotions that you're having that you'd rather not experience in their current form. And food changes that for you.

It makes it more tolerable. So if we aren't supporting ourselves with those things that happen in life, right, like things happen in life that stress us again or that make things

more challenging, if we don't have that support, we're so much more likely to go back to asking food to change that experience for us again. So again, thinking about it as an insurance policy to maintain your results, it makes sense to, at least on some level, have some support in your life. Now I'll just as an example, I have clients who have been in and out of my programs for five plus years, and what they'll do is they'll just periodically come back to another six months, you know, we have a continuation program come back and they know, like maybe they have a little something going on with their weight.

Or maybe they're like, I'm close to probably starting to gain, or I'm more tempted by food because this is going on or just like, this is a stress in my life and I want to work through it, and I don't want it to become a problem with my food or weight. And so we spent six months, we like, do kind of like a tune up. We clear things up and they're like, okay, I'm good to go now for a while. We won't see them again for six months, 12 months, 18 months, couple years, sometimes many years.

But they know they can always come back to the mothership. We're always here for them. So it's like they know, hey, if I need help, I can come back to that program. But in the meantime, they have other life support. They listen to this podcast, right? They hear me talk about these things. Sometimes they're listening to old episodes because that's helpful to them. Sometimes they're taking part in parts of our program that they maintain, like coaching calls or reading written coaching responses or things like that that help them to stay on track and of course, other ways of supporting themselves as well.

So you want to make sure again, that you continue investing in that. It's often a lack of investment in that life support that got us in the predicament we were in anyway, which was either gaining weight in the first place or regaining it after weight loss. So that's really what it comes down to. It sounds to me I'm like, it's kind of boring. I'm like, yeah, keep doing the things that work. It's like, duh, you know? But it sounds so obvious. But there's more to it than that.

You know? It really requires us to at least have some certain amount of paying attention. And so I want to finish this up with a question that you may be asking that people have definitely asked me that I even remember asking, and that is, does this get easier? Like,

really for real? Does this get easier? And I can tell you, after being in a position where I've lost weight for a long time, yes, it really does get easier, but it's a gradual thing.

And I think we want it to be easier within like a month or two of reaching goal weight. And for a lot of us, it is not that way. Not that it's hard still, but it takes time for these things to really, truly settle in. There were some things, like sometimes foods around different holidays that, even for the first couple of years of maintenance, were definitely more of a challenge for me. And now it's just not that big of a deal anymore. It just really isn't a thing. And it's not that I've done so much extra work on it. It's just like continuing to do the regular stuff to maintain doing all the support work.

Just doing the things that help me to feel good in my life, mentally and physically. It's just not. Yeah, it's just not as big of a deal anymore. It really does get easier. And I feel like the mental drama definitely continues to reduce. But I will also say that I think it's been 8 or 9 years since I lost weight, and during that time I've still continued working. I've worked with various different coaches and done some trauma therapy and some different things, and I think continuing to work on myself, on the challenges in my life have really helped to preserve that weight loss, because for.

Well, first of all, as new things came up and new stressors, it of course has helped to support me. So I didn't need to turn to food. But besides that, I've been able to grow and develop as a human being so that I am more resilient and I'm more capable of living all the ups and downs of life without the need for food. So my answer is like, does it get easier? Absolutely. And I think that if you are able to do the work it takes to maintain it, that's how it gets easier. Like if you lose the weight and then six months or a year later you start gaining it back again, then you gain it back, then you got to lose weight again, like you're interrupting the practice that you have at maintaining.

So the way it gets easier is by practicing, right? So you do it again and again and month over month and year over year. And that's how it becomes easier. I think it's a slower path to it being easy when there are the ups and downs in between of gaining and losing and gaining and losing. So I just want to offer you that hope, right. I think a lot of people really are just like, there's just no way of keeping it off. It's just not true.

And I know even some people are thinking with the medications, like, you know, maybe what they'll do is like, get off of it for a while, and then maybe they're going to need a tune up with medication, take medication for another month or two or something, get a couple pounds off even that, if that's what people start to recommend. Like, I don't actually have a problem with that whatsoever, but wouldn't it be cool to maybe be able to stretch out the periods of time in between needing the medication? Wouldn't it be cool to maybe eventually get to a place where you don't need that?

Like it's still everything that I just talked about? It all remains. It's all the exact same thing regardless. All right, friend, that's what I've got for you. That is the end of our Weight Regain series, part three preventing future weight regain. Um, this is when you can come back again and again. Of course, I didn't tell you at the beginning, but, you know, if you haven't listened to the first and second parts, you're going to want to take a listen to those as well. All right. Well, I am hoping that you have a great rest of your week and I'll talk to you next time. All right? Take care. Bye.