



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Well hello there friend! Welcome to today's episode. I'm really excited to have a guest on with me today who is actually one of the coaches in my program. Her name is Alison Jamison. Alison, welcome to the podcast.

[00:00:49] **Alison:** Thank you for having me. I'm so excited to be here.

[00:00:51] **Katrina:** Super excited to have you here. We're going to be talking today about something that you are a concept, a framework that you're actually certified in, and it's something that you've shared with our program members in the past, and people super loved it. And it's helped so many people. And that is the concept of Fair Play. But before we dig into that, let's just start off with talking about like the problems that exist for a lot of people, whether they're physicians or not, in the home. Like, why would we even need Fair Play? Like, who would be somebody like, what could somebody be going through that would maybe require them or not require them, but make them think that Fair Play, you know, why should they keep listening, I guess is what I'm saying. Like, what are the problems that people are dealing with?

[00:01:33] **Alison:** So I think when it comes down to like the brass tacks, you know, like the very essential part of it is people default into maintaining their homes. So whether that is because of the way that you were raised, whether it's the schedules that you and your spouse have when you first move in together, like oftentimes we default into doing things around the home, and that is only sustainable for as long as you both accept those defaults.

[00:02:05] **Katrina:** So just to be clear, what you mean is that in a hetero partnership, the woman tends to default into maintaining the home and in a same sex relationship, often there's one person who also defaults. Correct.

[00:02:19] **Alison:** Absolutely.

[00:02:20] **Katrina:** So it's like if no one's doing it, the woman's probably going to go and maintain the home.

[00:02:25] **Alison:** Or there might be some unspoken rule where, like, my job is more demanding than your job. And so even if we work the same amount of hours, like the person who has the less demanding job often is defaulted into being the person responsible for taking care of the home, or the parent who has to go pick up the kid when they are sick at school. And so it's about talking about those defaults and then deciding intentionally, how do we actually want to maintain our home? How do we actually want to handle the division of work in our household, that makes sense for us.

[00:03:04] **Katrina:** And I think we see this all the time. And you obviously are coaching in our programs and stuff. So you're talking about it and love, you know, for you to share any insight or, you know, kind of examples or things like, I think that this is often something that I mean, this is just known. I think that so many women struggle with this, but particularly professional women, where it's like, okay, you're working all day at your day job, and then you come home and you start your second job, you know, which is all the other things, like if there are children, all the things relating to the children and maintaining the home, whether it's, you know, doing laundry and cleaning and things like that yourself, or managing the people who are doing that, you know, hiring those people, it's a lot of like planning, right?

It's a lot of like holding things in your head. And I think it's totally right. It's like, I remember I graduated from residency two years before my husband did. My husband was still a resident, so it was like when he was a resident, it was like, well, I mean, he was there, so you know what I mean. Like, they owned him. And so, you know, we did have our first child during that time.

[00:04:04] **Katrina:** So it totally made sense that it was all on me to, you know, make sure that that everything was was handled and cared for. And then it was after that it was kind of like, like you said, the default plus the idea that, like, he's a surgeon, so, you know, if he's sick at school, is he canceling cases to go get our child? You know, so the idea, it was like kind of this, like it seemed like it was like, so obvious that obviously I would be the one who would figure that all out, as though it didn't strain me as well.

Like, you know, if I had to miss a day at work already being so jam packed and long waitlist and everything like that, like to figure out where to put those people. Right. Somehow, in my mind, because he was a surgeon that, like, trumped my work as a pediatrician. And then that was just. Yeah, like the way that we, you know, kind of functioned and, you know non two physician couples. So like in one physician couples you know I think that very much happens as well. So when we default into that what do you often see is like what's the problem. Like what's the complaint.

[00:05:11] **Alison:** I see a lot of resentment built up because eventually that default no longer works. And there hasn't been, again, that intentional conversation around it. So oftentimes partners come at each other about a problem and like it's you versus me versus we have a problem we need to solve. And so they almost create a battle, you know, a fight. I say my favorite fight with my husband was about the dishes. It's actually why I found coaching and then also why I found Fair Play, because when we would I'm the main cook of the household. And he was responsible for doing the dishes, and I felt like he needed to do them immediately after dinner was completed.

That's when dishes in my brain needed to be done, and I found coaching because I was also making him not doing the dishes mean like he doesn't love me, respect me, respect our house. Like I was creating a lot more drama about the dishes and coaching really helped me like eliminate that story. But the dishes still needed to get done and we needed to understand like where the timing was just misaligned and our expectations and why that mattered. And Fair Play kind of gave me the tools to navigate that part of the conversation.

[00:06:30] **Katrina:** Cool, right? Yeah, I love that because it's like it is different than our typical coaching that we talk about. It's like, yes, we can work on our own thinking. We can really figure out like, okay, what is the actual problem and what is, you know,

additional problematic thoughts that I create in my mind that, you know, makes this mean so much more, but also, who's going to get the kid when they've got strep throat and they've got a fever in the office, you know, like how is that going to go? And it so it doesn't really fully, often fully solve the problem.

You know what I think is another element of this? I think often women end up going, well, if I'm working full time and doing all this stuff, it's just way too much. So I'm going to go down to some sort of part time so that I can have a little more breathing space. But I think what ends up often happening is that that space is just further consumed with more of those responsibilities because it's like, well, I'm not the one who's working full time, so I should be doing all these extra things. And then, you know, a lot of these women just really don't feel better. It's just different. It's not better. Yes.

[00:07:33] **Alison:** Yeah, exactly. Well, and even if you are fortunate enough to be able to outsource some of the the work in the home, or even if you can ask your partner to do more around the house, that's really only one third of doing anything, because one of the things that they talk about in the system is that for every task that we have to do, there's the conception piece, like keeping it in your brain, thinking about the thing that needs to be done. There's planning when and how and where we're going to do that thing, and then there's actually doing it. So if you're outsourcing the doing it, you're still only outsourcing one third of that task.

[00:08:11] **Katrina:** Yeah. And that assumes that the execution is done the way it needs to be done or the way you expect.

[00:08:17] **Alison:** Yeah, exactly. And so like oftentimes like when I talk to couples especially like one partner is like, well, I keep doing more and more and more. But they're not owning the conception and planning piece as well. And so the partner that still has that conception and planning piece doesn't actually feel like anything's been removed from their plate because they're still the one thinking about it, reminding like managing the work of the home. And that takes almost as much, if not more, sometimes energy than actually doing the task.

[00:08:49] **Katrina:** And I think then what a lot of women feel is then they feel guilty, you know, like, I've got this great partner and they do so much. They're so helpful and they

do so many things. Basically, I can ask them, do anything and they'll say yes and they'll do it. So now I feel bad that I feel resentful. I shouldn't be feeling the way that I am. And what Fair Play helps you to discover is like, no, there's a legitimate reason why you feel that way.

[00:09:14] **Alison:** Yes, exactly, exactly.

[00:09:17] **Katrina:** So there are some I mean, we don't have time. The scope of this podcast is we're not going to get into, like every detail of Fair Play. There's obviously so much more to explore. What's the name of the woman who created Fair Play?

[00:09:27] **Alison:** So it was created by Eve Rodsky and she is a Harvard trained lawyer. I believe that she did organizational design and mediation before she got into this work and really basically asked, like, what happens when we treat our home as our most important organization? Through conversations with her own spouse, she went on to interview, I think, over 500 couples in the US to really understand, like what is actually involved in the invisible labor in a home, like, what are the actual tasks?

And basically through all of that data, they were able to kind of consolidate it into these 100 cards that are at play in the standard home. Now, this will differ if you have kids or not or if you're taking care, you know, work. A lot of us are in like that middle generation where we might have like elders that we're caring for and kids, but it really takes a look at all of the things at play in a home. There's 100 cards. And how do we split up these tasks equitably? Not equally. Because 5050 often isn't equitable like it really. We have to take into play. Like who has capacity?

Who has capability, you know, who does have the time, who has maybe more knowledge and can work through the thing. So it's really understanding, like what are my strengths, what are my partner's strengths, what are available to us, and then how can we find kind of agreement on what an equitable split would be for our home.

[00:11:01] **Katrina:** What it sounds like is like what you're really doing is you're just laying it all out and then making a deliberate decision together on how it's going to go. Not that it can't be changed. It's not like carved in stone. This is how it has to be forever. But at least for maybe for now or for this season or, you know, whatever it is, like, this is

what we're going to do. And then everybody has the opportunity. Each person has the opportunity to take ownership for their pieces. Like you're agreeing that you are going to do this willfully, knowingly. You understand that and then, you know, ideally, what's the ideal outcome?

[00:11:36] **Alison:** The ideal outcome is that everyone in the home feels like it's an equitable division of labor, and everyone gets the chance to kind of live the life that they want to. So one of the non-negotiable cards like this card must be in your deck is Unicorn Time And that is about allowing each person, each adult in the home to pursue passions, like to pursue things that they find interesting, and also make them an interesting person.

Because one of the things that you found in her data was a lot of the couples who were in their 50s and 60s and getting divorced after, like, maybe the woman stayed home and cared for the children. Is a lot of the comments the husbands would be making are like, well, she's just not an interesting person anymore. But she had devoted her life to like, caring for the home and like, didn't have the capacity to go out and volunteer and pursue her interests outside. And so now every human like deserves the ability to be able to go out and pursue those passions so that you can still have something to talk to your partner about after you've been married for 30 years.

[00:12:46] **Katrina:** Right? And have some purpose in your life. You know, when there are those transitions and things like that, you know, you hear that so often that during big life transitions, but also particularly in retirement. You know, it's like, but who am I? You know, what do I even do with myself? It's like it gives you that opportunity to explore that a little bit, like just actually have some time for fun. Yeah. I'm curious. You know, one thing I haven't asked you about this is what if you have children or other humans who live with you, who are capable of taking some of those responsibilities, do they take cards, too? Do they come to this conversation as well?

[00:13:20] **Alison:** Yes, absolutely. So we have a nine year, almost nine year old, and while they cannot really communicate what their minimum like their minimum standard of care of like what completing a task might be, I, as the adult and my partner are still like kind of dictating what that is, but they can do a little bit of the outsourcing.

But if you have a teenager, like they can absolutely be involved in that conversation and you can agree upon, you know, you're going to own the conception, planning and execution of this card when it's smaller children, one adult usually is still owning that conception and planning piece, and then the smaller kids are working on the execution. But it can be a really useful tool to even help kids start organizing their brain around, like having to be responsible for their own homework and, and those sorts of things because like, homework is one of the cards.

[00:14:16] **Katrina:** Or like lunches or things like that. Like that is so interesting. Right? I'm just thinking about how, you know, our kids will, you know, make their own lunches, but it's rare that they would like, initiate, you know, we have to be like, okay, go make lunch now. And then they're like, okay. And then they go figure out what they're going to have. So they decide what they're going to have, and then they and they make it. But it's that first piece that they don't they you know, it's like kind of like the well, so what happens if you don't remember to make your lunch? Like I guess you just don't have lunch. Yeah, right. Natural consequences. My favorite kind. Okay. Absolutely. Okay. So there are four rules with Fair Play. What I love about it is like, it's pretty simple. You know what I mean? It like, doesn't have to get super involved. So what are those four rules?

[00:15:02] **Alison:** So the first rule is that all time is created equal. So you know we've already touched on this a little bit. But society has often treated women's time as infinite. And men's time is finite. It's like men's time is diamonds. Women's time is sand. And, you know, whether that is is male, female like demanding job, less demanding job, whatever that is. But all the time is created equal. Like we literally all have 24 hours in a day. And it's our thoughts about that time that create those expectations that, you know, that buy into those societal beliefs. And that's why I think coaching and Fair Play goes so well together, because it's like, these are the thoughts we want to adopt into creating a more equitable home.

So you think about like a task, like applying sunscreen might only take two minutes, but that's not actually just two minutes. It's a 15 minutes of negotiating with the six year old to get them to, like, agree that they're going to wear it, or what parts are you putting on and what parts are they putting on like that? 15 minutes is just as valuable as your

partner being on a call with their boss for 15 minutes. Both of those 15 minute chunks of time are creating the life that you want to have together.

[00:16:16] **Katrina:** Mhm. I think that's really powerful that all time is equal because I really do that. The diamonds in the sand thing, I'm like oh man. Yeah. And I think though like when I'm just reflecting for myself, I think that we're socialized to believe this. Like there's a part of me that's like. But it's kind of true isn't it? Like, I hate to even say that, but, wow, I'm just realizing that's, you know, like that internalized sexism. Wow. So, yeah, that's something for us to even really work, to own and work through our own beliefs that it's any different.

[00:16:53] **Alison:** Exactly.

[00:16:54] **Katrina:** Yeah. Wow. That's super powerful. Okay, rule number two.

[00:16:57] **Alison:** Is reclaiming your right to be interesting. And again, this goes back to that unicorn card. It's like we really do all deserve time to pursue our passions. Like, we are not meant to just work and take care of a home like that is not living fully a life. And so we have every right to be interesting, not just to our partners, but to ourselves, to our friends, to our communities. And it's so important to reclaim some time for yourself. I will say, when people start trying to have more equitable rest and equitable pursuit of passions, even when the tasks may not have changed that much, the house feels so much more equitable.

[00:17:45] **Katrina:** Oh my gosh, okay. That's cool. So good. Okay. Rule number three.

[00:17:50] **Alison:** Is to start where you are now. This is a little bit of like the arrival fallacy at play is like, well, when school starts and we have a regular schedule, like then we can put this system into place because life will be normal or when the holidays are over, when summer break starts. You know, I'm sure you see this often with clients as I do too, in the program of like I can start losing weight when?

[00:18:16] **Katrina:** Yeah, after this vacation or something.

[00:18:18] **Alison:** Exactly. But this does not have to be like a far off daydream of creating a more equitable home. It's like, who am I? Who am I married to? What is our intention for trying to create this system? Like, why do we want to do this? And why is now the right time? Because tomorrow again never comes. It's like, how can we be invested in creating this change right now?

[00:18:40] **Katrina:** That's so smart. Yeah, because otherwise you just keep putting it off, looking for that perfect time. Yeah. Okay. And then the final fourth rule.

[00:18:48] **Alison:** Is to establish your values and standards. So this is kind of what I was alluding to with the dishes, with myself and my spouse, is that I thought that dishes needed to be done immediately, and they thought that dishes could be done, like at night or when they wake up in the morning. And it's like, why did I believe one way? And he believed a different way, and it's understanding how we came to those beliefs, why we believe those things, being able to talk about why it's important for it to be done at that time for us, and then working together to like, allow compromise and see the humanity in both of our choices, like no one's right or wrong, like there is no right time to take out the trash or to do the dishes. But it's like what time is right for us? And can we allow the person who holds that card to sometimes dictate that time and work through whatever thoughts and feelings we're going to have to, to allow them to own that level of care.

[00:19:48] **Katrina:** Mhm. That's so interesting. It just popped into my head as my husband is in charge of getting the garbage and the recycling cans out to the curb on garbage day. If I really think about it, I think my parents always put him out the night before, and a lot of our neighbors put him out the night before, too. So there have been times where I'm walking the dog kind of late, and I see that everybody else has their cans out and, you know, garbage. Maybe not so critical, but our recycling only comes every two weeks. So if you miss it, it's like a whole month. And that's just that's not good. So and you know that besides the point that probably most of it won't even be recycled, but that's, you know, outside the scope of this.

So the point is that there have been times where I thought, you know, I'll help him out and I'll just, you know, get the cans to the curb right now. And then I found out that he actually was like, oh, like kind of like, oh, why'd you do that? Like he still was planning on emptying the garbage in the kitchen one more time, or, you know, like he had some

other, some other plan, like I, by trying to help, I actually threw a wrench in his plans. He would really prefer to do it when he's going out to work that morning.

And in my mind I'm like, why would you do that? Because then you're more likely to forget. And it's just like, one more stress as you're like trying to get out the door. But it's his thing to own. He does remember. The cans do get to the curb and it's just like, wait, there is no problem. Except the way that I was thinking about it. And it's not even my job or my task that I own. So it's his thing. Let him do it his own way. Yep.

[00:21:22] **Alison:** So it's like, okay, that is my work. And also so then there is also a natural consequence to that. And it might not be wonderful to have your recycling sit around for a month. But like in the grand scheme of things, maybe that's just something that he has to experience as well.

[00:21:38] **Katrina:** Yeah, and probably that has happened. But like it really doesn't happen. That's the thing I'm trying to think the last time I mean it's been a long, long time. So anyway, yeah, it is interesting to think about like where do we get these ideas about what is the right way to do something, or when something should be done, or how something should be done. And to your point about the standards, I remember when I had my daughter, so my third child, really just consciously thinking to myself, I'm going to need to drop my standards of like what I expect from everybody, from myself, from this, just the state of this home.

Because now we have three kids, you know what I mean? So yeah, it's like sometimes it's it's a good thing to just even recognize, like what standards fit with what we can do. You know, like, it can look like something else at what cost. Right. You know. And am I willing to pay that price. Yeah. Okay. Cool. Okay. So while we kind of, like, wrap things up a little bit, there are some specific things that you super duper love about Fair Play. And I'd love it if you could share them.

[00:22:40] **Alison:** Yes. So the first reason I really love Fair Play is because I feel like it has done some of the pre-work of creating that to do list in the deck of cards, like it's not asking you to write down everything you do in the household, and to remember everything you do at the household. To be able to bring to the conversation with your partner. Like that piece is already done.

And really, the first step of playing with the Fair Play cards is to eliminate as many cards as you can from your deck. So if you don't have kids, any cards that relate to child care or taking care of children, you can just get those out of your deck like it is wonderful. And then there's so many fewer cards that you have to divvy up. So it kind of reduces, I think, some of the mental load of going into these conversations of maintaining a home because the to do list is already defined. So that's super helpful.

[00:23:34] **Katrina:** Yes, I agree that sounds yeah, so much better than like let me think of everything I do around here. Are you kidding me? Oh my gosh. No thanks. Yes.

[00:23:44] **Alison:** Exactly. The second reason why I love it is because it creates that shared language. So you're kind of talking about maintaining the home in a similar way. So again, we've already talked about like the conception, planning and execution of any task, but it also takes you through defining what that minimum standard of care is going to be like that the trash gets taken out daily, or does it get taken out when it's full? Like you get to have those conversations in a way of like, how do we solve getting this task done? And the final piece is that it shifts the focus from, like, you need to do this, and I need to do that like the you versus your partner to it's us playing against the house. And how do we win at the system versus at each other?

[00:24:35] **Katrina:** Yes. I think that's so huge. Right. It's like you're both on the same team. You both, you know, even if your standards are different or things like that, but you both want to feel happy and content and peaceful in your home. You know, like there are things that you can agree on that you jointly are wanting. So yeah. I think that's so smart. That's so good. So there's different ways to kind of apply this to yourself, right. Like you can do it yourself. You can buy like the card deck and there's a book I think. Right. And you can go through it yourself. Or you can also, you know, hire a coach to help you and kind of facilitate. Is that correct way of describing that?

[00:25:12] **Alison:** Yeah. So the website is fairplaylife.com and their Instagram is [@fairplaylife](https://www.instagram.com/fairplaylife) as well. They have so many resources. So on the website there is a documentary that you can watch. I think it's free on Hulu and YouTube right now. Any other streaming services? I know specifically in the US, I'm not sure as much abroad,

but I know it's available there. There's a book, there are the deck of cards, and then on the social media, they also have a link to their certified facilitator. So there's a mixture of coaches and therapists that are trained in this facilitation. And so you can find someone who can work with you locally. Work with you virtually or again using the book and the cards yourself. You absolutely can go through and do this on your own, which.

[00:25:57] **Katrina:** Is really cool to know that you just have to know yourself. And it seems like, you know, like people are going to know. Or maybe they tried to do it themselves and it wasn't going well. It's like, okay, I need someone who can help walk us through it. Or sometimes, like if we hire this person to help us, then we know we're actually going to do it versus like, that book is just going to collect dust on the shelf and like, you know, sit on the nightstand for years, like, oh, that's right, we were going to do that. And then like never, never doing it. Yeah. Well, I think to me, Fair Play is the answer to what so many women struggle with, which is that division of labor.

You know, the mental load that comes with the organization of everything and, you know, making sure, you know, trains run on time, basically, and things like that. And then, you know, maybe taking an inordinate amount of responsibility for if they drop a ball, right. A train is late, a train breaks down, you know, to continue that metaphor, like you know, we're not perfect. We have a lot going on too. Like, you know, we get sick at times, like stuff happens. It is a great tool to use to help everybody to feel better and have the things get done that need to get done.

So like if it helps you feel better, it helps your relationship. I mean, I can only imagine how this helps to prevent a lot of marital strife. Let's just say, you know, or relationship strife and it's incredible. So I love that. Alison, thank you so much for coming on and sharing this information. Obviously, you're in the program and, you know, helping people through our program as well. And thanks, everybody. Go check out Fair Play.

[00:27:27] **Alison:** Thanks for having me.

[00:27:32] **Katrina:** Ready to start making progress on your weight loss goals? For lots of free help, go to katrinaubellmd.com and click on Free Resources.