

UFYB 56: The Business of Dating



Kara Loewentheil
MASTER CONFIDENCE COACH

Full Episode Transcript

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Kara Loewentheil

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Welcome to *Unf*ck Your Brain*, the only podcast that teaches you how to use psychology, feminism, and coaching, to rewire your brain and get what you want in life. And now here's your host, Harvard law school grad, feminist rockstar, and master coach, Kara Loewentheil.

Hello my chickens, how are you guys? I'm sorry, you all. Every time I say you guys, I get angry emails. How are you all, chickens? All orientations, presentations, all you chickens. I am excellent. I have one month left of work before I take off for the holidays and a real vacation, and I am committed to getting so much done and so much out of the next four weeks because I think a lot of us get to Thanksgiving and then we just like, go on autopilot.

But the year is not over. No matter what your goals are. So speaking of goals, I picked the title of this podcast on purpose, The Business of Dating. It's kind of a play on it because I see the exact same thought patterns holding my clients back in dating and in their businesses if they're entrepreneurs, but even if they're not, just in their work lives.

And entrepreneurs especially, it could be coaching or being a physical trainer or an interior designer, or anything else where you're essentially selling a service that has a lot to do with you, as opposed to like, a bag of soccer balls or something, although I'm sure that entrepreneurs that sell soccer balls also have these problems. And again, these thought patterns come up in women who work in companies, you know, in professional, non-entrepreneurial roles too.

So even if you're not dating or don't have a business, I do recommend you listen to the podcast. You're going to want to hear it because what it's really about is rejection. That's what's at the heart of all dating and entrepreneur problems is the fear of rejection and the unwillingness to take massive action if it might involve rejection.

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And both of these concepts are important on their own, massive action and rejection, but they combine in this really specific way when it comes to sales-based businesses and dating. But again, even if you're not dating, even if you don't have a sales-based business or both, you're going to get a lot out of this episode if you ever deal with your fear of rejection, meaning you're a human and if you listen to this podcast, I'm sure that you deal with it more than most humans.

So stick around, those of you who are, I don't know, married and don't sell things. It's still going to be relevant. Okay, so let's just first review massive action because some of you probably don't know what that is or haven't listened to that episode. Massive action means that when you set a goal, you commit to taking action until the goal is achieved no matter what. It's not until you get tired, it's not until you get bored, it's not until you get insecure, it's not until you feel hopeless, not until you take enough action that your mom and romantic partner and some expert on the internet all agree that you've done enough and it really should work by now. Doesn't matter.

Massive action means if you don't have the result, the only lesson to draw from that is that you have not taken the amount of action that is required to get to the goal. I'm going to say that again. Massive action means if you don't have the result you want, whether that is a certain title at work, a certain amount of revenue in your business, a partner that you're married to or not married to, whatever the thing is you want, running a marathon, crocheting the biggest potholder the world's ever seen, whatever the result is, if you don't have it, the only thing we know is that you have not taken the amount of action that is required to produce the thing you want.

Truly, this concept alone will change your fucking life if you apply it. You could pay me all the money in the world for this one paragraph and it would be worth it. That's massive action. So why do people not take massive action? There are basically two categories of thought patterns that get in

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the way. The first one is fear of failure. "I can't do this, it won't work, I won't succeed, I'll fail, there's something wrong with me, the reason I don't have it is because I'm broken, as opposed to having just taken the action."

So the fear of failure one, by which I mean any of these thoughts, "I can't do it, it won't work, I won't succeed, I'll fail," that whole litany. Massive action itself as a concept actually takes care of this if you truly commit to it. If you truly commit to massive action, then failing is not an option because you're just going to keep taking action until you get what you want no matter what.

So if you're truly committed to massive action, there's no reason to be afraid of failing because you are committed to taking action until you succeed. Most of us don't actually commit to it that hard and that's why we're afraid of failing. But, like, in and of itself as a concept, massive action actually takes care of that.

The other thought pattern that gets in the way is the fear of rejection. If we are paralyzed by a fear of rejection, then even if we've committed to massive action, it will take us forever and we may never even get off the ground because we're so scared of how we will feel if we put ourselves out there and we get rejected.

So are you starting to see how this relates to business and dating? What do sales-based businesses and dating have in common? They both require massive action and they both require experiencing a shit ton of rejection to get what you want. Where we go wrong is believing that dating or business is supposed to just work magically, and that if it doesn't, there's something wrong with us and we're broken, or everyone else is broken.

So if you have a business, if you're an entrepreneur and you don't have the client base you want, you will either believe that you're a failure or that people don't want what you're offering. You're broken or they're broken. If

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you're trying to find a partner and you don't have the relationship you want, you'll either believe that there's something wrong with you, you're broken, or that other people don't want what you're offering and there's something wrong with them. They're broken, right? Either you're wrong or they're wrong.

But here is the secret; no one is wrong. You just have not done what it takes to succeed. And a lot of you are going to be bristling right now because you have a business that isn't succeeding and you take a lot of perverse pleasure in being the victim of that, or your dating life is a mess, or you're not even working on it, and you have a real story about how you're always the victim and always just sort of left behind and not good enough in your romantic relationships and you're very attached to that story.

Neither of those stories is true. You just have not done what it takes to succeed. You have not made enough offers, and that might be an offer to hire you, or an offer to go on a date with you. Business, dating, it's the same thing. It works exactly the same way. So why don't I have the 500 podcast reviews I want? Because I haven't asked you to do it enough times to get to 500, which is why I'm going to pause right now and remind you to go rate and review the podcast so that other women can find it.

I recorded this whole podcast for you and I'm willing to try to use Jewish guilt to get what I want. I obviously don't cause your feelings. I can't cause your guilt, but I'm going to ask you to go rate and review the podcast so that other women can find it because women need to know what's in this podcast because nobody else is teaching it this way. And I want to stop talking about this too because I know you want me to get back to telling you about all the ways you're screwing up your own life because of your brain.

I'm going to do that, but you need to go leave a review for the podcast, okay? Because otherwise I'm going to have to keep talking about it. Just

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like those NPR drives. Okay, you know why that was easy for me and I didn't stress out about doing it at all? Because I don't fear what you'll think of me. The reason you don't make enough offers in your own life, and again, that could be your service, that could be a second date, that could be taking on a project at work or asking for a raise or asking for a promotion - those are all offers in their own way - the reason you don't make enough offers is that you are afraid to experience rejection.

Because when you do make an offer and the person doesn't want to buy from you or doesn't want to date you, you make it mean something terrible about yourself, and you feel like you're going to die from the shame and humiliation of rejection. So in order to succeed in your business or in dating, you have to be able to reframe and deal with rejection.

So let's start by defining rejection. Rejection is just a feeling in your body. It's just a physical sensation. And for most people, it feels like shame. Your face gets hot, you have a pit in your stomach, you want to hide. I think some people also experience it with kind of an edge of anxiety if they're having thoughts about what the rejection means about their kind of future prospects. But fundamentally, rejection is a version of shame, in my opinion.

And remember, as a human, your brain is wired to be particularly responsive to rejection and shame. I talked about this on the episode on social anxiety from a couple of weeks ago. We evolved out of hunter-gatherer tribes that depended on social cohesion to stay alive. So many of us are wired to be kind of constantly vigilant about rejection and to avoid shame as if it will literally kill us because that's what your brain thinks.

Now, there's an extra layer to this because as women, we're also taught to think that there's basically nothing more humiliating than rejection. Especially social rejection, which comes up in the business context or sexual rejection, which comes up in the dating context. And women are

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especially socialized to think that sexual rejection is totally devastating and humiliating.

And this is one of the way that patriarchy is bad for everyone. It teaches us that men always want to have sex and that whether a man thinks you are attractive is the most important thing in the world. So if you're a woman who has sex or romantic relationships with men, a man rejecting you is basically interpreted by your brain to mean that you're a hideous, disgusting, and unlovable troll who should be ashamed for even existing. That is what patriarchy has taught you to think.

Now, it's so ingrained that often when I teach this to clients, it like, breaks their brain and they don't understand how it would be possible to view sexual rejection as not being a big deal. Think about men though. Men are not socialized this way. Think about how men think about sexual rejection. Men are taught that they're supposed to be the aggressors, that women are supposed to demure and in fact, it goes way to the harmful extreme. Men are taught to not take no for an answer in ways that actually produce a lot of action and behavior that we don't necessarily want.

So it's actually like, taken to the opposite extreme. Now, I'm obviously not suggesting that you not take no for an answer. I'm not saying we should replicate that. What I'm trying to show you is that feeling like you will die of shame if you suggest a romantic or sexual interest and someone turns you down is not because it is truly inherently humiliating and you should feel terrible. It's because you have a very specific set of thoughts you have that you were taught to think because you were socialized as a woman.

And we can see that men are not taught to think this way, and that for the most part, they see sexual and romantic rejection as just a normal part of life and something they have to go through in order to get to the small percentage of offers they make that will be accepted. So do you see how

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different that is for most of us in our dating or business lives? Or any area of our lives?

Even if you're not dating or have a business, you can probably see this pattern in your existing relationship. I see a lot of women who have this problem in their existing romantic relationship where they take sexual rejection to be humiliating. Or just your work life, even if you work in a big company, how much you hold yourself back just so you don't have to experience rejection because your brain tells you that that's humiliating and fatal.

The flipside is that if you're willing to experience rejection, you will be unstoppable in going after what you want. And this is the mindfuck about it is that rejection isn't even always rejection. So if it is rejection, it's just a sensation in your body. But often what your brain interprets as rejection has nothing to do with you. So why didn't someone buy your services the last time you offered them?

Your brain's answer is always because you aren't good enough and no one wants what you're selling and you're going to die under a bridge, right? But like, let's just brainstorm some other explanations. Maybe the person didn't need your services or didn't think they needed them. Maybe they didn't see the value, either because you didn't explain it very well, or you did explain it well and they just have different thoughts. Maybe their thoughts about money told them they couldn't afford it. Maybe they were scared they would fail or not like it and didn't want to try.

What do all those reasons have in common? They're caused by the thoughts in other people's brains. They have nothing to do with you. Even if someone did buy your service because their thought is that they don't like you, that still has nothing to do with you. Some people do like you and some people don't like you. Now, if you're the one who causes that, how do

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we explain it? We can't. It has to mean it has nothing with you. It has to do with their thoughts.

Why doesn't someone want to go out on a second or third or fourth or 10th date with you? Your brain's answer is always that you're unattractive and unlovable, and you're going to die alone. But what are some other explanations? Maybe they didn't experience chemical attraction because your immune systems don't match up the way they need to to produce those pheromones. Maybe they're hung up on their ex. Maybe they aren't really ready to be dating. Maybe they were intimidated by you. Maybe you remind them of their third-grade teacher. Maybe they just only like redheads and didn't tell you.

None of that has anything to do with you. Even if they think it has something to do with you, it doesn't. It has to do with their own thoughts. Again, what is our proof? We know that at some point in your life, someone has expressed romantic or sexual attraction to you. I'm fairly confident about that. If you were truly the problem, that would never have happened.

Whether you're selling a product or service or yourself as a date, you get to choose what to make rejection mean and what even counts as rejection. So I want you to try this thought experiment because I think it's so powerful. If I told you that science had proved that most successful businesswomen, the most successful businesswomen - I'm saying businesswomen on purpose because my teacher and I have a whole thing about how when I was getting trained, I had this whole block about how I didn't want to be a businesswoman. And you know what, the year I had that thought I made \$20,000 and this year I made a million, and you know what the difference is? I changed my thoughts about being a businesswoman.

So let's say I told you that science had proved that the most successful businesswoman are those who get rejected 100 times before their first sale. Or if you're dating, what if I told you that science had proved that the

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happiest people go on 100 first dates before meeting their soul mate? Then if you got one or two or a dozen or 50 rejections, it would be no big deal. And we could change those numbers up totally, right?

I could tell you that you have to get 500 rejections or go on 500 first dates. What would be different is your thought about it. Right now, if you don't close a sale or someone doesn't want to go out with you, you think something's gone wrong. You think, "I'm broken, this shouldn't be happening, everyone else is doing it better, it worked out for everybody else, there must be something wrong with me."

Whereas if you believed, if you just had the thought, "Oh, this is normal, I'm supposed to have to get rejected 100 or 500 times," then your thought would just be, "Oh right, this is exactly what's supposed to happen, I'm right on track." And you'd be excited to rack up more rejections because you would know that each no you hear is one step closer to your goal of getting a yes.

You are allowed to think that now, even though I can't give you a certificate about how many times businesswomen have to be rejected or how many first dates you have to go on. I don't know how many it is for you, but here's what I do know; every no gets you closer to the yes you want and the only thing holding you back is your unwillingness to hear the no.

Your problem hearing no is because you think you should be always hearing yes. And you look around at other people's yeses and you don't see all those nos, and you think they always only heard yes. You could look at me and see how I've built my business in three years and think that all I ever heard was yes. You would be so wrong. I heard no so many times. I wasn't able to get here this fast because I only heard yes. I was able to get here this fast because I was willing to hear so many nos so quickly.

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Your problem is because you hear a no and you make it mean something about you. About your product, about your services, about your skills, about you as a person, or a potential partner, about how you look, whatever it is you make it mean. But if you understood that hearing no is a crucial part of the process, then you wouldn't have to take it so personally and you wouldn't have to make it mean anything about you.

It kills me when I see entrepreneurs trying to console each other all the time by telling each other that the market is saturated or no one wants my life coaching, or you have to be selling business coaching, or a thousand other small lies that are meant to be kind but they're really anything but kind. And I see woman, especially straight women dating men, console each other all the time by telling each other that dating is so hard, and it just comes down to luck, and it's the worst and there's no good men, and a thousand other small lies that are meant to be kind but they're not kind. The intention is kind but the result is that they justify you believing your negative thoughts are true.

And what does that get you? Just more of the same results. So here is the truth; if you don't have what you want, it's because you are not taking the action required to get it. If you keep taking rejection personally and making it mean something about you, you never will. So think about what it would be like to build a business or pursue your career and your office, or find love, if you didn't take a single thing that happened personally. If you believed you would succeed and get what you wanted as long as you kept taking action until you got it. If you understood that you have to make a certain number of offers and you have to hear no a certain number of times to ever get that yes that you want.

Building a business and finding love have way more in common than people think. They both require putting yourself out there again and again. They both require being willing to experience rejection and to understand that it has nothing to do with you and your own value. And both in business

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and in love, the number one predictor of whether you will get what you want is how willing you are to try and fail and try again, to get the business, to get the relationship, and in the business and in the relationship.

So get out there, make some offers, hear no, and try again. You can do it. Be brave, my chickens. I'll talk to you next week.

Thanks for tuning in. If you want to start building your confidence right away, you can download a free confidence cheat sheet at www.karloewentheil.com/podcastconfidence.