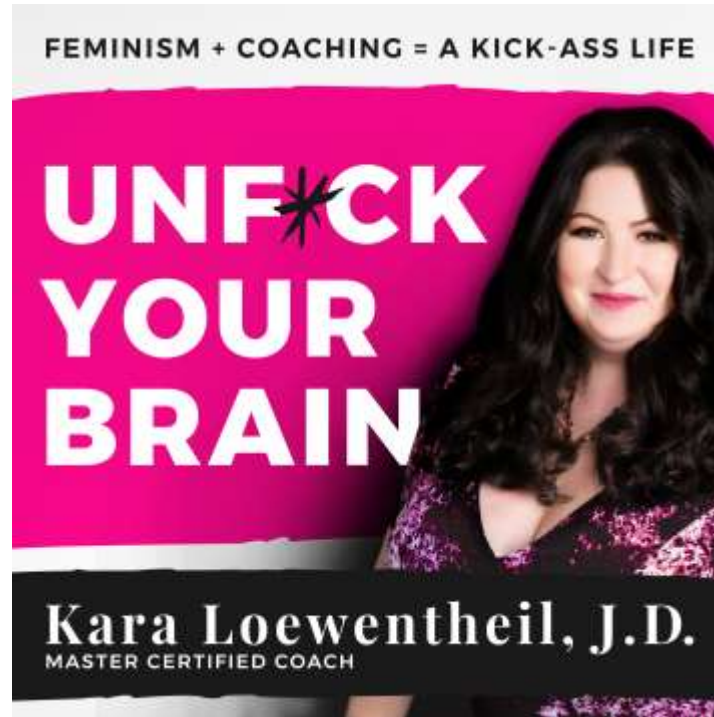


UFYB 52: TRUST



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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 all doing? I am making it day by day. It's been a little bit of a challenging week, but I am recording this before I start two weeks of travel, which is going to involve a lot of airports, but I think is also going to be super fun.

So first, I'm going to Dallas to meet with my teacher and my mastermind. And then, I'm going to New Orleans to do some research and scouting for the retreat that I'm holding there in January, which I'm really excited about. Don't get excited those of you who aren't my clients, it's only for clients who've been through *Unf*ck Your Brain*. Maybe I'll do one that's open to everyone in the future, but for right now, coming to my retreats, you have to go through *Unf*ck Your Brain*.

So I just don't want any of you to be like, "Oh my god, I'm coming to New Orleans." So I'm going to scout for the retreat and then I'm going to Chicago for a coaching event that includes a yacht party, you know, like you do. So I have to figure out something to wear on a yacht party. Then I'm going back to Dallas because I'm going to teach at this week-long event where, with my teacher and another master coach, we're teaching a whole bunch of new coaches how to make their first \$100,000.

So it's going to be super fun. I'm flying, like, every three days and I need clothing for two climate zones and a ball gown. But it's going to be a lot of learning and growing, so I'm excited about that. And because I'm traveling, of course, someone has to stay at my apartment with my cat because he's 16 and he's used to having me home all day. So if he only gets a 20-minute visit once a day, I come home to bad things having happened to the furniture.

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So there's a reason I'm telling you this. I have someone who often stays here and I was recommending her to another friend recently and I said, you know, I trust her implicitly. You know, it's a thing people say, it's a saying, I trust them implicitly.

And then afterwards, I started thinking about what that really meant. And so today, I want to teach you about trust because I think that we usually have it 100% backwards about trust. I mean, if you've been paying attention to this podcast, you know that basically every coaching concept involves discovering that you've had something mentally entirely backwards, right?

That's our jam around here; you always have it backwards. So usually, what we think is that trust is something that someone else creates with their actions. So we think, if we trust someone, it's because of how they have behaved. But we know that other people's actions don't cause our feelings; our thoughts do.

So trust is a feeling in the way that I'm using it here, and it's caused by our own thoughts. And trust can also be a thought; I trust them. But when we're talking about trusting someone, I think what we really mean is a feeling, and I think that feeling is security, or certainty.

So when we trust someone, what we mean is, I have thoughts about them and their behavior that create a feeling of security for me. It's definitely not created by them because think about this, many people trust someone who is actively deceiving them. Like, imagine someone cheating on their partner.

The partner totally trusts the cheater because they have the thought that the cheater is trustworthy and wouldn't cheat. But they're totally wrong about that. And now, imagine the partner confesses to the cheating and says, "Hey, I know you didn't know this, but I've been cheating. I've been sleeping with someone else..." whatever it is.

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Now, that person is telling the truth, but suddenly, their partner no longer trusts them. So we can trust someone when they lie to us and we can not trust them when they tell us the truth, which I just think is a perfect illustration of how trust is caused by our thoughts because, if it was caused by the other person's words or actions, it would line up in a way that makes more sense.

So I think what we really mean when we say that we want to trust someone is that we want them to follow our manual so we can have the feeling we want to have. We want to believe that we know how they will act so that we don't have to think and wonder about it. If we decide to believe that they are a certain way, then we think that makes our lives easier.

Our brain just wants a shortcut to not think about it, so we just decide to believe that they'll behave a certain way and we can trust them to do that. And sometimes, we've had an explicit conversation about it and agreed to what they are going to do, or we're going to do. But a lot of the time, we just think, well everyone knows that there are ways that a friend or a partner or a parent or a boss should act. We just think that's understood.

And then suddenly, if they don't act that way, if they don't have the same assumptions as us, we decide we cannot trust them. And this is how you can end up with two people in a situation where they have very different ideas about whether one of them has done something wrong or violated any trust at all.

I think that trust is so important to us because we think the person we are trusting has the power to cause our feelings. So really, what we're saying when we trust someone is, I trust you to create for me the feelings I do want to have and not to create for me any feelings I don't want to have.

Which is impossible, right, because other people don't create our feelings; positive or negative. I think that the only person we truly need to be able to

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trust is ourselves. We are the only one whose thoughts, feelings, and actions we can actually control or vouch for. But I think the less we trust ourselves, the more we want other people to take responsibility for our emotions because we think we don't know how to do it.

We don't know how to make sure we feel the way we want, so we want someone else to make that happen, which makes no sense, of course. If you can't even manage your own mind, you definitely can't manage someone else's mind. But the flipside of that is that is you know you can trust yourself to manage your own mind, you actually don't have to trust anyone else.

You don't have to distrust them either, it just doesn't have to be a concept that you're particularly preoccupied with. The one thing we can always trust other people to do is whatever their thoughts and feelings are driving them to do, right? Your thought creates your feeling which drives your action. Their thoughts create their feelings which drive their actions.

But if you take responsibility for your own emotional state then that's fine. You can accept someone else, the reality of them, whether you trust them or not. And again, that doesn't mean you necessarily distrust them, which would be like being actively suspicious. It just means that trust is not really a factor; it's just not such a big thing.

You can accept people for exactly who they are. You can choose to trust them, quote en quote, if you want, which really means you can choose to create the emotion of trust by thinking about how they'll act the way you predict they'll act. Or you can choose to believe that what they do really isn't an issue.

But the bottom line is that if you trust yourself to manage your own mind, you'll find that you're much less invested in what other people do or don't do. And that's as it should be. If other people aren't responsible for your

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feelings, then you can get out of their business. You don't have to have so many opinions about what they are doing or should or shouldn't do, and you don't have to put your emotional eight on them behaving predictably.

Trust is always a choice. We can choose to think thoughts that create the feeling of trust, or we can choose to think that's to create a feeling of distrust, or we can choose to think that trust just isn't really a significant issue. Where we go wrong is thinking that our thoughts and feelings are caused by the other person or that they need to be provable, that they need to be based on some kind of true facts that justify them.

The truth is that humans are capable of anything. We can never truly know what someone else will or won't do. We've all thought that we could and been wrong. And then we tell ourselves that the other person changed or tricked us. But the truth is that we just didn't know the full set of facts about them.

We were choosing to believe they are one way when that wasn't true. If you create trust with yourself though, if you always have your own back and you are working on managing your mind, you really don't have to worry so much about whether to trust other people. You can make much cleaner decisions about it without emotional drama.

That's why it becomes so difficult for us to think about whether or not to, quote en quote, trust someone again after we think they've broken our trust, because we're essentially asking them to act in a way that will change our thoughts and feelings about what they did, which is impossible. They can't change that at all.

So first, we trusted them because we thought we could predict their behavior and that it would be what we would want them to do. Then it turned out that their behavior sometimes isn't what we want them to do. And now, we want them to prove to us that we can believe that they'll go

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back to doing what we want them to do, which is, you know, sometimes they will and sometimes that's a lie. But either way, they can't cause those thoughts and feelings for us. They can't make us think that.

So let's go back to my cat sitter example. Let's say it was a friend who cat sat for me. I kind of want to get out of the employee realm because it's a little bit different. I don't think trust is where I worry, but of course, with an employee, you want to know they can do their job. And if they don't, you would take some steps. So let's just take it out of the employee realm.

If I have a friend cat sit for me, if I get home and it turns out my friend never showed up and my cat hasn't had food or water for a few days, I could tell myself that my friend deceived me and that I was wrong to trust her. I could feel a lot of negative emotions, like betrayal and anger and mistrust.

I could have a whole conversation with her about how she misled me and how I shouldn't have trusted her and I could try to make her take certain actions to rebuild my trust. Like, I could have a manual for what I want her to say and what emotions I want her to display and what I want her to do, and I could try to make her follow that manual so that I could allow myself to think certain thoughts about her again.

Or, I could simply say to myself, well, I'm definitely not having her watch my cat again because obviously she isn't good at it. And that would be that. My cat is literally yelling right now. He can hear me talking about him.

I could choose to continue the friendship or not, but either way, I do not have to create a lot of emotional drama about my trust in her and try to get her to say a certain thing or act a certain way just so I can think trusting thoughts again. What's really happened is that I was mistaken. I thought that she would feed the cat.

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As it turns out, she didn't feed the cat. Now I know that she didn't feed the cat in that instance, and if I'm going to pick someone to feed the cat, I'm probably not going to pick someone who already didn't do it once. I just know more about her now.

That doesn't mean that I have to believe that she misled me or deceived me or I can't trust her or, you know, she's not a good friend and I can't trust her in this totally other circumstance. It's just more information that I now have about who she is.

So this is deep stuff and it's confusing, I know, because it's the opposite of how we've been taught. So I really recommend that if your brain hurts from this podcast, you just start with being curious with yourself about why you need to trust someone because it's invariably the case that you think you need to trust them because you think that they need to behave a certain way so that you can feel okay.

So you think that your spouse has to not cheat on you so that you don't have to feel sad and rejected, or betrayed. You think that you need to trust a friend not to share your confidences so that you don't feel betrayed and you feel loved.

We think that we need to trust other people so that they'll do what we want and predict so that will have the feelings we want. You want to trust them to create your feelings for you, but that's not their job and it's not even possible. So just be curious with yourself about what trust really means for you and whether or why it's necessary to have it for other people at all.

Most of us spend way too much time worrying about whether we can trust other people and trying to manage them into being trustworthy. So it's almost like we're so committed to our story about them that we can't see the reality.

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So at first, we trust them not to take a certain action. Often, we haven't even explained that to them; we just think they're supposed to know. We trust them not to do it. Then, when they do it, we're so committed to the idea that they shouldn't do it that then we try to convince them to become a different person who won't do it.

You see that? We're so committed to our vision of them as this person who wouldn't do this thing that, when we get contradictory evidence that in fact they will do this thing, we want to disregard that and we want them to convince us that they are this person who they never were in the first place.

And we spend so much energy on that and it's such a waste of energy. Whatever people are doing is what they do now you know that it's so valuable to know that you are having thoughts predicting how someone would behave and that you were wrong about that.

And then you can make decisions about how to engage with them or what to do with the relationship from that place rather than being so committed to your idea of how they should be that you are not even able to take into account how they actually are. Most of us spend way too much time worrying about that, managing other people, and not nearly enough time building our trust with ourselves by learning how to manage our own minds and take care of ourselves.

So if you shift the focus from trust in others to trust in yourself, you will actually feel safer than you ever have before. And that's all you wanted by trusting other people in the first place. Alright, my chickens, work on trusting yourselves, I'll see 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.karaloewentheil.com/podcastconfidence.