

UFYB 74: 100 Episode Review - A- Work, Let it Be Easy, and Compound Interest



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 Loewenthal.

Hello my chickens. So before I get started today, I have to tell you all something important because I realized that a lot of you don't know this, which is very sad. If you are not following me on social media, you're actually missing out on a lot of teaching because you hear the podcast and I do talk about the podcast on social media, but also I write articles for other publications and I get interviewed and I do blogs for other places with different teachings and other lessons.

And I share all that stuff on social media. You can't obviously get it on the podcast. I can't sit here and read them all to you. So if you're not following me on social media, you are actually missing out on teachings that you're not going to get through the podcast.

Like this week, there's an article up on MindBodyGreen about why women stay in relationships for too long. I didn't write that piece. I would have written it about people obviously and I'm not sure that I agree that there's an objective too long but still, I contributed quite a lot to the article and there's some powerful questions that I came up with that are in there and ask yourself about your relationship.

Or like, a few weeks ago I had an article also in MindBodyGreen actually about how to hack your brain for better sex. There's lots of good stuff going on but I'm not going to read them all to you on the podcast. So I've got one coming out about imposter syndrome and one coming out about the top three mistakes you're making at work. That stuff's coming out in the next four to six weeks on different publications.

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So the best thing to do is to go follow me on Instagram or Facebook or both, and we always post my articles or blogs or interviews or whatever on social media so it's very easy to stay up to date that way. And if you're on my email list, sometimes we send them out over email but not always just because we might have already sent some emails that week so really social media is the way if you love this work and you want to soak up every bit of it, following me on social media is actually the best way to do that.

So, I'm going to make this easy for you. You could just look for me. I'm the only Kara Loewenthal in the world. It's not going to be hard to find me. No one has the same last name outside of my immediate family. But to make it super easy for you, if you want, you can just text us. So if you just text the word Instagram to us, I'm going to give you the number in a minute, I will be able to send you all the links.

And actually, I think what we'll do is we'll include the last couple of articles that I did, the ones I just talked about. We'll put those in the email too so you can really get everything all at once. So all you need to do is text 347-997-1784 and send your email address. We've talked about this before. If you are already on my list, you want to use that same email address or else you start getting everything twice and then you start unsubscribing and then the email system thinks that we're spam and then everybody cries.

So text 347-997-1784 with your email address, all lowercase, and you'll get a text asking for the code or the keyword, secret message, whatever it is, you'll get an auto text back that asks you for the words so we know which thing to send you and then you just need to text again, Instagram. All one word, all lowercase.

And then we will send you the direct links to follow me on social media and the links to those two articles about why people stay in relationships too

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long and how to hack your brain to have better sex. Now listen, if you are international, you can still text us. For most of you, it should work. People can communicate across the ocean. You just need to add a +1 or sometimes you have to add a +001, however you would text the US. Look it up with your local carrier if you need to.

Now, if for some reason you really cannot text us, you can email info@redesignyourmind.com. This will be in the show notes. All the instructions will be in the show notes but your last option should be messaging me on Instagram because then it takes three steps to get your information to my team for them to send you the thing and there's just too many ways for that to go wrong and I get so many Instagram messages a day.

So I do not recommend that. Try to text us and if you can't, then email us and the email will be in the show notes. It's just info@redesignyourmind.com. I want you to get what you want and sending me an Instagram DM is not the most efficient route for you to get it. There's just so many in there and they don't let you organize your inbox. I have a lot of feelings about it.

Okay, so you're all going to go follow me on social media. I'll tell you again at the end so you can get all the good teaching and not miss any of the wisdom or quasi wisdom or at least funny jokes. I also share good memes sometimes. Listen, it's amazing. You definitely want to follow me on Instagram. And we have Pinterest, we have Twitter also, I don't really do anything with Twitter but we're on there if that's your favorite. You'll still get the articles.

Okay, so let's get to it. So when I was creating the file to save for these notes when I started for this episode, I realized that I have now recorded

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100 episodes of this podcast. If you count starting from when it used to be The Lawyer Stress Solution, when it was a podcast for lawyers, this is actually my 101st or 102nd full episode. But I didn't really notice that the anniversary - I knew the two-year anniversary was coming up and 52 times two, we're getting right around 100.

But I didn't realize this was it because we rebranded the podcast, *Unfuck Your Brain*, started renumbering, so this is episode 74 of *Unfuck Your Brain*. And so I wasn't really thinking about it, but it's the 100th episode of the podcast total, which is wild. And I thought it was such a good opportunity to reflect on what I have learned.

So in this episode, I am going to share the top three lessons I have learned from two years as a podcaster. And this is kind of a spoiler alert, these lessons aren't really about podcasts per se, or rather there's as much about podcast as there are about anything else.

So here's the first one. The first lesson is that A- work makes the world go round. And when I say A-, I am grading generously on a curve. So when I started as a coach, I was coming off of a decade that I spent in law school and clerking and litigating and academia and lawyers are trained to get everything exactly right, down to the position of a comma in a footnote.

So I thought I needed to make everything perfect before I put it out in the world, and that was so stressful and crippling and really held me back. And of course I didn't know how to do a podcast, I'd never done one before, and so I was in business for a full year before I launched my podcast even though I knew that a podcast was a good idea, even though I knew it was the way to get new clients and teach people and help people who couldn't work with me.

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I still didn't launch it because I had perfectionism paralysis. I didn't know how to do it perfectly, I didn't know exactly what to say, and I didn't know how to be sure it was perfect. Here is what I have learned in two years of podcasting since then. You don't need to do A+ work or even A work. A- work is what makes the world go round.

And by A- work, I mean work that isn't perfect. It could be better, but you don't spend your time perfecting it. You don't footnote it to death. You know it's probably not organized as perfectly as it could be. You realize three days after you record your podcast that you forgot to make one of your main points and you let it go.

Because here's why; A- and out the door beats A+ work every single time because if you could actually produce perfect A+ work, that would be one thing. If that was a true option that you could do A+ work and get it out the door also, that would be one thing. But you can't. It's a lie. It's an illusion because what happens is if you're trying to produce A+ work, what you actually produce is avoidance and procrastination and perfectionism paralysis.

And the thing never gets out the fucking door or what happens is if it's something that really does have to be done, it gets out the door right at a rushed deadline, at which point you're only churning out A- work anyway because you're working against the deadline. So there's no such thing as you doing A+ work that's going to get out the door. It's either not going to get out the door at all or you're going to actually spend all the time procrastinating and avoiding because of the anxiety about making it A+ and then in the end it's going to be A- work anyway.

A+ work is an illusion. I just don't think it really exists. And if you would just accept it that the work was going to be A- from the beginning, you would

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have done it in one tenth of the time and skipped all that procrastinating and avoiding.

Now, I know that some of you right now, doctors and architects and lawyers and accountants and every other professional who has very detailed work is currently muttering under your breath at me about how in your job, things truly do have to be perfect. And to that I say bullshit. I was a federal appellate court clerk, I was a litigator. There's no such thing as perfect.

If you're a doctor, if you're an architect, if you're a lawyer, if you're an accountant, whatever you do, nothing is perfect. And believing that things need to be perfect is holding you back so much and it's an illusion because there is no perfection, no matter how hard you work, mistakes sometimes get made and fixating on trying to make something perfect is actually going to make you so anxious that you are less likely to catch mistakes.

So launching my podcast was the biggest gift that I could give my perfectionist self because when you are running a six-figure and then a seven-figure business, when I started it was six, right now it's seven, a podcast is only one of 20 things you are doing in a given day, or now, in a given hour.

You simply cannot make it A+ work, if it even existed, or A work. If it's an A, you're thrilled. I write my notes in one go, I record, I send it to my podcast editor and I never listen to it again. A- and out the door is better than A+ work that never happens.

The second lesson I have learned from two years of podcasting actually relates to this, and that is to accept the gift of things that come easy to me rather than using them as an excuse to work out my perfectionism muscles. So after I finally got my shit together to launch the podcast, meaning I was

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willing to put something out that wasn't perfect, I was still struggling a lot with this kind of A+, A- issue.

The podcast was out there, I was getting it done, it was helping people, but I was also spending a lot of time and energy thinking about how it would be better if I just made it better. So I was actually doing A- work, which is what allowed it to get out the door, but then I was constantly beating myself up about how I should be doing A+ work.

I could plan it out more, I could get it done earlier, I could organize it better, I could revise drafts of my podcast notes, I could do several recordings and listen to them and make it better in between. It was an endless list and I was constantly thinking that I should do it differently.

Now I remember saying to my teacher, my coach, "It's like I can do an A- job in very little time but I should take the time to do the A+ job and really make it great." I was talking about that and my teacher and my coach said, "What if it was okay if it comes easy to you?" And this is a lesson that I have had to keep learning over and over for my whole life and especially in the last few years since I started this business and this podcast.

Let the things that come easy come easy. There are so many things in life that will not come easy. There are so many places in life we have to be brave and try hard and fail spectacularly and fall down and get dirty and get back up and fall down again. But some of us take the things that come easy and we try to make them harder on ourselves.

We don't think it's okay for anything to come easy. Because if we can do an A- job easily, we think then we should do the A+ job, or at least the A job because that would be even better and because if something comes easily, then we didn't try and it's not worthwhile.

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Because here's the thing; this thought pattern, it has nothing to do with the quality of the work. It really has nothing to do with the purpose you're doing the work for. Because really, even though I'm talking about A-, A+ work as if we could tell what the difference is, we really have no idea what's A+ or A- work. That's what I realized when I really dug into this thought pattern.

I was assuming if I revised the podcast 12 times it would be better at the end, but what if that's not true? What if it was worse? What if it made less sense? What if it connected worse with people? What if my particular genius is that I can do a podcast from start to finish in two or three hours and it's great the way it is?

What if messing with it would make it worse and worse? I was assuming I'll reach more people and teach them better and they'll get more benefit if I make it perfect, but what if that's completely wrong? What if the people who learn from me would be turned off by something too perfect and polished?

I truly can't know, which I know that the fixation on doing it better isn't really about the quality of the work. It's just about criticizing myself and assuming that if something comes easily, then it's not worthwhile or good enough and that being different than I am is always better.

But there's so much to work on in life. There are plenty of things I have to learn how to do well through trial and effort. It's okay to let this be easy. This lesson, I keep learning it but it has been so impactful in other areas of my business. Pretty much any time I create content now, a workbook, an exercise, a talk I'm going to give, the mantra I try to have is let it be easy.

I'm not saying I don't read things over and revise and try to make sure I'm communicating effectively and I definitely still sometimes get caught up in this thought pattern, but if one of my gifts is that I can teach and

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communicate easily without a ton of preparation, that's something I can celebrate and enjoy rather than distrust. Because that just rings after all that I have more time to work on improving the areas where I really do need more work.

That's what's so crazy about this thought pattern is it never actually makes us work harder on the thing that comes easy to us because the whole thing is it comes easy. So all it does is just waste effort and time and energy and self-flagellation when if we just accepted that the things that come easy come easy, then we could spend that energy working on the things that don't come easy and we would actually get so much more done and it would be so much more pleasant.

So that's the second lesson. The third lesson I've learned is that small steps add up. This sounds obvious, I realize, but perfectionist brain loves to dream big and then do nothing. If we can't do huge perfect things immediately and perfectly then why even bother.

So I've talked about this on the podcast before. Early in my coaching career, I read a book called *The Slight Edge*, which is by this guy named Jeff Olson. It's about 17 times longer than it needs to be, but it was still really powerful, and basically explains that compound interest works in your life as well as in your finances.

Let me explain what that means. I think there's actually a book out now called *The Compound Effect*, which is probably a little more concise because that person had a professional book editor. But the oldie but goodie is *The Slight Edge*, which you can still get online, which I gave - I used to give to my clients all the time.

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Okay, so here's how it works. For those of you who don't know what compound interest is, compound interest is the way that interest builds up on an initial investment. So if you invest \$20 and there's a 2% rate of return, you get that every week, the math isn't just \$20 times the 2%, times however many weeks. Let's say it's for five years.

It's not \$20 times 2% times five years because the 2% is generated on an amount that is getting bigger. So let's say you get interest every week. On the second week, you now have a little bit more than \$20. You're getting the 2% interest on \$20. So now you have \$20 plus 2% of \$20, which is \$20.40. And then the next week, you get 2% not of the original \$20 but of the new balance of \$20.40.

And then the next week is the same, the amount that you get the interest on keeps getting bigger because each week's interest is added to that original \$20. That's what's called the principle. Each week's interest is added to the principle, to the original \$20, so that original amount gets bigger and bigger and each week you're getting 2% on the bigger amount and it keeps going.

So the amount of money that you're getting the 2% interest on gets bigger as each accumulation of weekly interest gets added onto it. So if you don't like math or finance just rewind that once or twice, I promise it'll make sense. So you think about that in your life. It means that every little action you take on its own isn't such a big deal and it doesn't seem like that much.

But put together, it creates increasingly and really exponential returns. And I think the podcast is such a good example of that. So we are almost at the two-year anniversary of the podcast and I have missed I think only one week in those two years. I didn't do the math but I think that's 90% of the time? Whatever is 99% of the time.

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That means that 99% of the time, I showed up and recorded a podcast episode every single week, even when I was tired. Even when I had other shit to do, even when I didn't want to. Sometimes I went on vacation and then I had to record double episodes ahead of time for weeks or months. I've shown up and recorded episodes for every week for two years.

And I was looking at my stats on the podcast before I did this episode and I love it. I think it's so fascinating. So in iTunes, there's different categories and my main category is health. And so there are charts of the top podcasts overall in health and then of the top episodes in health. And so this podcast has been *Unfuck Your Brain* now for 18 months and it's had three million downloads, which is kind of mind-blowing.

And what's interesting to me is if you look at the podcast episode chart, I actually don't have an episode in the top 100 or 150. There's no one episode of my podcast that has so many downloads that it's in that top 150 episodes. But on the podcast chart of my category, I'm always in the top 50. I think today I'm 34. It moves around, but I'm always in the top 50.

And I love that because it shows that the success of this podcast, which who gives a shit really, it's not about the success of the podcast, it's about how many people it's reaching and helping, and how much it has grown and all of the impact it's having and having the podcast itself always being in the top 50 without ever having a top episode to me shows that it's not about one big episode or one perfect teaching.

I didn't do one A+ episode that carried this whole thing. It's the consistent accumulation of A- work. It's the consistent accumulation of small efforts. One podcast a week. Some are longer, some are shorter, some are mind-blowing, some not as much. But I kept showing up and I kept recording and I released one every single fucking week and here we are.

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Three million downloads in 18 months. So the way this really ties back to the first teaching on this episode, which is that perfectionist brain wants you to do that one big perfect thing, but the way you grow and evolve and impact the world is to do many small imperfect things but to just keep doing them.

The more I see of other coaches and entrepreneurs, the more I see how true it is that the people who succeed are just the people who didn't stop. It truly is not the people who have any magic abilities. It's not even the people who obviously having money or connections is helpful, but that's not the only determination either.

I have seen people succeed who had none of that because they just kept going and I have seen so many people who had money and connections fail because they didn't. Compound interest, compound effort, you just keep pecking away as chickens do and what you produce will far exceed the sum of its parts.

So those are my three lessons. A- work makes the world go round, whatever is easy, let it be easy, and compound interest will change your life and will change the world. Alright, if you want more good stuff because why would you not, don't forget to come follow me on social media. That's where I share all the additional teaching and writing I do for every other outlet that isn't my podcast or blog.

All you need to do is text 347-997-1784. That's 347-997-1784 with your email address and when you get a text asking for the code or the keyword, you text back Instagram. One word, all lowercase. Remember, if you're international, you need to add a +1 or sometimes a +001 and if for some reason you really can't text us, you can email us at

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info@redesignyourmind.com and all of this will be in the show notes so if you want to, you can just go to www.unfuckyourbrain.com/74.

Alright my chickens, I will talk to 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.