

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

[UnF*ck Your Brain](#) with Kara Loewentheil

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review

Top 3 Lessons

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? It has now officially been two years of the podcast, which means it's been three years of my business and it has been a wild ride, let me tell you. And for those of you who are new around here and wondering why is the year review happening in April, which is a random time for it, it's because April 2016 was the date that I officially left my last legal job, which was running a think tank at Columbia, at the law school, to start my coaching business.

So for me, my year goes April to April, and in the last year, my business has doubled and tripled in some ways. My revenue has more than doubled, my employees and independent contractors have more than doubled. And so today I want to talk to you about the top three lessons that I have learned this past year.

I like to do this episode once a year to kind of teach you guys what I learned over the past year and kind of help you see behind the scenes and see where I am in my own thought work and journey because I think that's so important.

No one has reached enlightenment and no one is perfect and I for sure am still learning and growing and my commitment is always to share that with you guys so that you know that wherever you are is perfect, it's normal, and we're all on this journey together. I might just be a little bit far ahead from some of you, which is a good thing and that's why I'm your teacher if you listen to this. My teacher is ahead of me.

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

So here are the top three things I've learned this year. Number one is what you can imagine now is nothing near what you can actually achieve. You have to watch for these plateaus in your thought work because they create plateaus in your life. Even when you've come a long way already.

I talk about this a little bit in the massive thinking podcast. It's one of my big takeaways from this year. Your current dreams are limited by your current mindset, and that's true for all of us. Now, sometimes it's obvious. For those of us or those of you who don't believe in yourself, your capabilities, of course, that's sort of an obvious place where your mindset is limiting your dreams.

But what's less obvious is that this process keeps happening at every level. So for instance, I would say that I absolutely believe in myself. I believe in my capabilities, I believe in my skills, I believe in my willingness to fail and learn. I know I can manage my mind and that doing so is the key to everything.

But nevertheless, what I can even imagine is possible for me is still limited by whatever my current set of thoughts are. So I think I probably told you guys this last year on this podcast, but when I started my business, so in 2016, my big goal was to replace what I had been making at my last law job, which was \$150,000. I wanted to replace that by my third year in business.

So my plan was like, I'll make \$50,000 the first year, \$100,000 the second year, \$150,000 the third year. Now meanwhile of course, I wasn't even accounting for the fact that revenue is not the same as take home. But whatever, I didn't know anything, I was just starting out.

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

So that was my big goal, that was my big ambitious goal. And that first year, I was exactly on track with that and I made exactly \$50,000 from April to April, which was a third of the goal and that was exactly what I was trying to make that first year because that's what I had thought about so much that I made it come true.

But I started to see as I got there that I could do much more, and actually kind of ironically seeing that I had decided 50 and then I had made almost exactly 50, and not in a very clear linear way. It wasn't like I had the exact business plan and then I just followed it to make 50. I sort of made it in ways that I wouldn't have predicted, but because it was so close to exactly what I had predicted or told myself I would make, I started to see like okay, my thought really became a reality here.

I thought I would make 50, I made exactly 50, so I can't go into this thinking I'll try to make this much and maybe I'll just make more. That's not going to work. So I started to see that I could do more if I thought more. And then in my second year of business, I made about eight times that original amount, and in my third year in business, I made more than double what I made in my second year of business.

So when I started, it was a big mental project to believe that I could possibly make \$150,000 in a year. And then at a certain point, that started to seem obvious. Of course, I could, I already had. And then it was a big project to believe that I could make half a million in a year. And then that started to seem obvious and then I did it, and then it was a big project to believe I could make one million in a year.

And now, having done that, having made a million in a year, that seems obvious and easy, and now it's a big project to believe I can make five million in a year. This can go on forever. Wherever you are, your brain will

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

take what you've already accomplished as the default and then it will want you to doubt that you can get to whatever the next step is.

You have to keep an eye on that because since you have changed your thinking and changed your results, you will sometimes fall into the trap of thinking, oh well, I do believe in myself and I know I've changed my thoughts and results, so if I now have a thought that doing this particular thing is hard or impossible, that must be objective truth because I'm not someone who doubts herself. I've done all this thought work and I feel good about myself now, so if I think something is hard or impossible, then I must just be logical and objective about that.

Do you see what I'm saying? Brains are so sneaky. It's like your brain will learn how to kind of present things to you as if it's just telling you the facts and you can kind of miss it if you believe now that you do believe in yourself and so you'll just think that whatever your brain says, oh, well I believe in myself so I wouldn't be underselling myself. So if my brain says that's impossible, that must just be the facts.

So sneaky. So like, imagine the thought that you start with is I can't build a business because I don't know how. So you work on a latter thought like I can learn how to build a business, and that works. It gets you off your butt and taking some action. You read some books, you try different things in your business, you're less afraid of failure.

Over time, that thought becomes part of your background and you stop thinking about it. But then eventually, it can actually start to hold you back. It's like you climb the ladder but you don't even see that you're just at a landing and you can't see the top because your thought is that you're learning how to do it.

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

So you're always still tentative and doubting yourself and believing that you don't yet know the answer. And eventually, that will hold you back so you have to notice it's happening and start climbing the ladder again. I just want you to think about this. The way you feel and act if your thought is I know exactly what to do for my business is very different from I'm learning how to build a business.

When you're thinking I know exactly what to do for my business, in that reality that you create with that thought, your business exists and you have expertise. When you're thinking I'm learning how to build a business, you're telling yourself that your business is not quite real yet, like it's not there yet and that you're a novice.

Or you can take an example from dating. I use business and dating as my examples so much because I just think they both involve so much room for growth and so much chance for rejection. You kind of have to create something out of thin air and it's where I've done a lot of my own work.

But these principles apply to any area of your life, of course. Let's say your initial thought about dating is no one will want to date me because I'm too old or fat or nerdy, or whatever mean thought you have about yourself. So your first step up the ladder is you start practicing a thought like, some old or fat or nerdy people find love.

And that feels way better, right? It gives you some hope, you take some action, you go on some dates. But you can plateau there because you're still thinking some and you're still not thinking about yourself directly. And again, that's a good first step but you just have to watch out for how it can become kind of your default, then you're not working on the thought anymore and it's tripping you up in ways you don't see.

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

It's much different to believe some people like me find love, than to believe I'm going to find love because of exactly who I am, or my partner is out there looking for me and they're going to love that I am this age or size of have these nerdy interests.

So for me, the lesson in my business in the last year is that I have to keep setting ambitious goals and not get complacent that because I have a mostly managed mind most days, I can just trust whatever it says. It's like my brain no longer screams at me.

It's learned to talk in a much more reasonable tone, and I can make the mistake of believing that what it's saying must therefore be reasonable or true. But just because it's learned a calm inside voice doesn't mean that it's right. So that is the first lesson.

The second is that whatever skillset you needed to get to the level where you are will become useless immediately and you'll need an all new one. That is just how entrepreneurship is designed basically and nothing has gone wrong. This isn't really just true for being an entrepreneur, it's really true for being a human who's trying to grow, but it just is very obvious when you're an entrepreneur.

I was having coffee with a former client the other day. We were talking about this and we were trying to come up with the right metaphor for this part of being an entrepreneur. And I said it was like you keep jumping out of a plane and every time you have to sew the parachute on the way down. And she said yeah, and you also don't know how to sew, so you have to learn that while you're falling also.

Entrepreneurship is a funny thing because it's basically a way of doing in business what we all have to do in our lives. And that is we have to

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

constantly shed our current self in order to grow and evolve into the next level. Your thoughts create your results. I say that all the time.

So whatever thoughts you have now are what created your current result, and that means if you want to create a different result, you will need new thoughts. Because by definition, the thoughts that got you here won't work to get you there.

Again, it's easier to see when the thoughts are negative, but it's true even when the thoughts are positive, and that's really what I've been learning this year. The first couple years in business I was really learning how my negative thoughts were producing results, but now this year I've really learned how even the thoughts that seem positive are producing certain results and if I want different ones, I'll have to change them.

So my thoughts about my business right now feel amazing. I feel great about it. These are the thoughts that got me to a million dollars and two employees. These are not the thoughts that will get me to five million and 10 employees. And how do I know that? Because if they were, I would have the results already.

Our thoughts produce our results. If I had the thoughts of a person with a five million dollar a year business and 10 employees, then I would have already the results of a five-million-dollar business and 10 employees. So every time you want to grow your business, you have to jump out of the plane again, even if the plane is nice now.

It's easy to want to jump out of a plane when it's like, filled with snakes. But now it's like you're on a lovely corporate jet having a fruit salad and you still have to jump out of the plane if you want to grow. And it does get less

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

scary because you know you've survived the previous jumps, so it's never as scary as the first time.

And maybe you've picked up some basic sewing skills, but there's a new pattern to the parachute every time and you still have to figure the whole thing out while you're falling through the sky. So it can be challenging to let go of what you know works. You've put in so much effort to create it and you've come so far, and you're proud of what you've accomplished.

And it can feel like what you have now is your prize for having done the work and you don't want to risk losing it, but the truth is what you have is never the prize. The journey is the prize. Your growth is the prize, and you have to be willing to let go of who you are now to grow into who you can be.

If you are one of my students, you may have heard me use this metaphor before, but lobsters - totally going somewhere related with this, I promise. Lobsters have a really important genetic cellular difference from humans and lobsters actually don't die of old age the way humans and almost every other animal do.

We are DNA as it's replicating, as we get older, parts of it are basically getting chopped off and eventually we just could die of old age if nothing else happens to us. Lobsters don't have that. Lobsters can just grow and grow and grow forever. But lobsters are not truly immortal and here's why. Every time a lobster grows, it has to molt. It has to exit its skin. It has to shed its skin.

And a lobster exoskeleton is obviously quite hard, that protects it. When it molts, when it sheds that, it goes through this period where it's soft and vulnerable and it takes a lot of effort to do that. It takes a lot of energy for

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

the lobster to do that. And so lobsters eventually die when they don't have the energy to molt anymore. They don't have the energy to grow and their current exoskeleton basically is a prison that they can't get out of.

But that is what happens with our thoughts. We have to be willing to put in all that effort and energy to shed that old self and be willing to feel vulnerable and terrible in our new soft shell until it hardens again, until we really get it down in order to grow.

So that is number two, and my feeling about growth is like, if we're not growing and evolving, what are we even doing here? What's the point? To me, that's the point of life. And that really ties into my third lesson, which is it's so important to surround yourself with people who feel the same way about that.

The most important thing I invest in every year is in coaching and mentoring for myself. It's more important than anywhere else I spend money in my business or my personal life. And it's not because I need someone else to tell me what to do. I really don't. It's because I need a community of people who are committed to living intentionally and managing their minds.

Sometimes I need coaching when my brain is trying to kill me. Sometimes I need people around me who don't have my self-imposed mental blocks about me. They can see possibility for me and my business. This goes back to number one. Far beyond what I can see right now with my current thoughts.

When I first found thought work, I was on my own. I just had found my teacher's work online and I was doing it on myself. And it was totally helpful, but of course there were places I got stuck or didn't see where I

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

was going wrong. And once I found a community of other people doing thought work, that just changed everything for me.

And for me, that was through coach certification because I wanted to become a coach. I kind of found my thought work sisters there. But even today, I'm in two masterminds and a group coaching program because I always want to be surrounded by people who are committed to taking responsibility for their own lives.

It's actually really strange now when I'm occasionally around people who don't manage their minds. I notice how much complaining and blaming and kind of victim thinking and disempowerment and unhappiness that they're expressing and it is just such a waste of human potential and such a waste of time.

It makes me so grateful that I'm mostly surrounded by friends and colleagues who are committed to managing their minds, and students and clients who are learning how to do so. Because we're all in it together, we're all holding each other accountable and supporting each other's growth and that's such an important thing to have around you, that kind of community.

Whether you're an entrepreneur or not, to have comrades on the journey of yourself doesn't have anything to do with business, who are committed to growing and evolving the same way you are. That's really everything. The studies all show that the people we spend the most time with are the best predictor of our own traits and health. All sorts of things are influenced by who we spend our time around.

And that's really the main reason that I created The Clutch, which if you didn't listen to the bonus podcast from earlier this week, it's my new online

[UnF*ck Your Brain](#) with Kara Loewentheil

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

feminist coaching community. Because I know that there are a lot of you out there who don't have that kind of community around you and I really wanted to create that for you.

I am hearing from so many of you who listen to the podcast and you try to implement what it teaches, but if you talk to your friends or family who don't listen to the podcast about how your thoughts cause your feelings, they think that you have drunk the Kool-Aid or joined a cult.

And I know some of you have a friend or two who you share the podcast with, which is awesome. But just imagine what it would be like to have 10 times or 100 times that many friends doing this work. What would it be like to be able to surround yourself with people who are taking responsibility for their own minds and who want to help you see your blind spots and grow and evolve and learn?

That is just everything, and that's why I created The Clutch, that's what it is. Because you should never try to navigate a man's world as a woman alone, I believe, and you should never try to navigate your own brain all on your own. It's not safe to go there alone at night.

So when you join The Clutch, you get that community. That's why it's so important, and that's where we nerd out on thought work and the podcast because I know for me, part of the reason that community is so important is that it helps me to think out loud. I happen to be someone who really thinks well in conversation. Like, talking to people helps me refine ideas and asking questions, and I really wanted to provide that for you guys, to have a place to nerd out on thought work and the podcast with me and with each other.

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

So in The Clutch, we do weekly discussions of the podcast, you get weekly discussion questions, we do bonus listener Q&A episodes that are only available in The Clutch. I'm in there and there are coaches in there that I've hand-trained personally to help you with your thought work. There's a live coaching call every month where I teach and coach some of you, and then you get access to a ton of bonus resources.

I've put everything amazing that I teach in there. You get a five-week course called The Clutch Self-Coaching Shortcut, it's only available in The Clutch, and you get access to workbooks on all different subjects like work stress and dating and body image. And honestly, I'm not even remembering all the stuff we put in there. It's so good because we just put everything in there.

So if you think you would benefit from the accountability and the support and deeper learning of having people in your life who are doing this work, if you think that that community would be helpful for you, you need to come join us in The Clutch. By the way, this is so important you guys, if you didn't listen to the bonus podcast.

A clutch is a group of chickens. Did you know that? I'm telling you, I'm obsessed with this name because obviously a clutch is what you need exactly when you need it in kind of urban, contemporary vernacular. And then it also is a little bag you can take with you everywhere, but it's also a group of chickens. So good.

Alright, anyway, so if you want to come join The Clutch, which you should, it's www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. And this is super important, it's only open to join for 48 hours from when this podcast drops. Don't be mad if you're listening to it late. I dropped that bonus episode to let you know

UFYB 77: UnFuck Your Brain Year in Review Top 3 Lessons

when it originally opened. But when this podcast comes out, there's only going to be 48 hours left.

Enrollment closes at midnight Pacific Time on Friday, April 19th 2019. That's tomorrow if you're listening to this the day it came out. If you miss it, you can't join this month. So get moving.

www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch or check the show notes or my social media for the link and I will see you there, my chickens. 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.