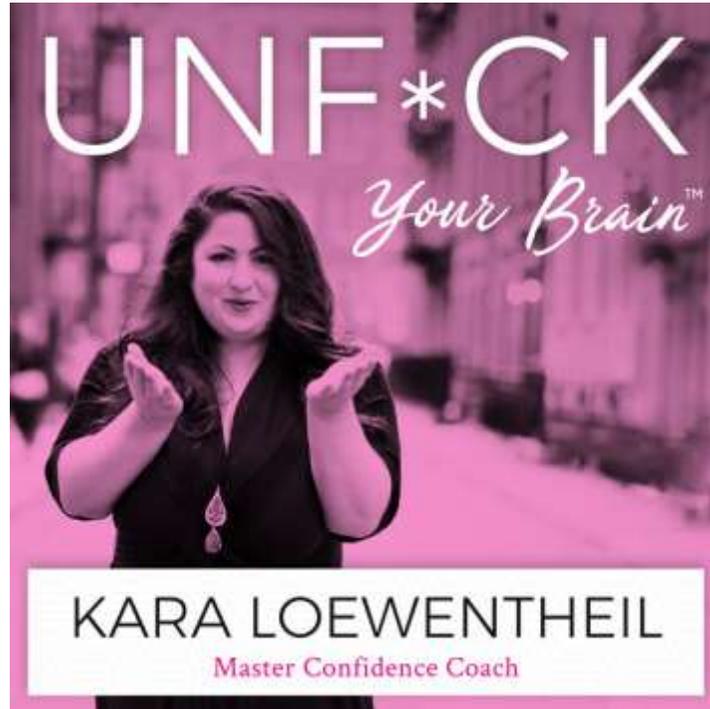


**This Is Your Life
(Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

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. So we have come to the last episode in this special series, and of course, the regular podcast will continue and if I get any burst of inspiration, I may add to this limited series in the future. But I think that we have really covered all of the basic tools you need to start managing your mind now or any time.

And you've also gotten a taste of life coaching and hopefully been able to glean from that how it works to take these concepts and apply them to your own thinking. And of course, if you want more help with that, that's what we're doing inside The Clutch all the time.

So today, what I really want to share with you is how to start looking forward. The whole reason that we want to regain our equilibrium and learn how to deal with our challenging thoughts and feelings right now is because we eventually want to be able to orient to the present and the future.

And I think that one of the kind of common things that our brains want to do whenever there's a disruption or things are uncertain is that we want to get back to normal. And so we're all trying to look forward to when things are normal again. When is it going to be back to normal? Is it going to be next week? Is it going to be next month? Is it in three months? Is it in a year?

We're all sort of trying to get back to normal. And that's totally understandable and it can be helpful sometimes to remind yourself, like of

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

course this too shall pass. That was my grandparents' one piece of coaching advice. This too shall pass, and I think that that's true.

All things do pass. Things do change. But just like I've been talking about throughout this series, what this pandemic is giving us the opportunity to do is to make peace with uncertainty and change. And so when you sort of trick yourself by thinking, "Well, things will go back to normal eventually, I'll know what to expect in the future," it's a little bit like taking a drug. It helps in the moment and that's okay sometimes, but it will wear off. It doesn't solve the underlining problem.

If you're telling yourself, "Well, I'm just going to feel terrible until this is all over and back to normal and then I'll feel okay," it may be a little bit helpful mentally because you're telling yourself things will be okay at some point, but you're sort of basing that on something that you can't know will be true. We don't know what the future will be like, and you're just sort of giving up on the now and just sort of telling yourself, "Now is going to be terrible or now is going to be a waste but my life can start again when things are back to normal.

And the truth is a lot of us did this well before the pandemic. We weren't saying back to normal, we were saying, "Once I get that job, my life can start, or once I lose the weight, my life will really start, or once I find a partner, my life will really start," or once I whatever. So this tendency of humans to kind of put off living with intention and with presence I think is common and I actually think in some ways it's kind of a reaction to our own mortality in its own way.

Like, we just always want to believe our lives will start in the future because then we don't have to face the truth that the present is all we ever have and all we ever can know we have. And so I really want to encourage you to think about what it would be like if you accepted that your life right now is

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

the life you have. That doesn't mean it's not going to change. Life is change. Things are going to change.

But rather than just sort of decide this is a period to grit your teeth and get through until things are normal again, what if you could try to embrace that this is life, this is the life you have, this is what life is right now, and that's not a problem. It's not worse than life was before. It's not better than life was before. It just is life. This is your life.

And I often, when I'm coaching clients, give them the example of pretend you woke up from a coma and you had amnesia and so you didn't have any of your existing negative thoughts about the person or the circumstance or whatever it is that I'm coaching them on. What would it be like if you just started from scratch, you just started fresh?

And I think that's such a powerful tool to use now. What if you were an alien that came to Earth and it was just like, oh, this is what life is here? Or you were born and grew up in this, like, this is what life is. With our current brains that are comparing life to what we think it should be, we think that would be terrible.

But the truth is as I've talked about on multiple episodes, we're going to have positive and negative emotion in any circumstance. That's part of what makes humans so adaptable is that it's actually our internal experience that creates our experience. It's our thoughts and feelings that create our experience and those find the negative and find the positive in any circumstance, and we can intervene in our thought process to focus it more on the positive and focus it less on the negative in any circumstance.

So life is always going to be a mix of those emotions, but what if you just believed that this life you have now, this is what life is, this is what it's always been, and that's okay. Nothing has gone wrong. Your life isn't

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

supposed to be different than this. This is what your life is supposed to be and this is what it always has been.

Your life has always been living in a current set of circumstances that may change in any time. And so if you stop comparing your life to what you think it used to be or what you think it should be, and this is true under any circumstances. Forget the pandemic. We cause so much suffering and we take ourselves out of our actual lives by constantly comparing them to what we think our lives should be, or what we think needs to change.

So what if nothing needs to change? It's such a paradox because everything will change, but we can't control what direction external things change in. So it's a matter - if you just accept that everything will change in ways you can't control, then it becomes okay and nothing has to change or everything can change, and either way, it doesn't matter.

I did a meditation yesterday with Sharon Salzberg, who's a meditation teacher, and it was interesting. She was teaching a lot of the same things that I and other teachers teach because there's only so much new human wisdom under the sun. But she was using this term from her meditation teacher who used to say, "Be more equanomous," which I don't think is a word but it's supposed to be a version of equanimity, cultivate equanimity, be more equanomous, which I just like because it almost sounds like a water animal of some kind, like an aquatic mammal. Be more equanomous.

Like it's a hippopotamus who's very chill and peaceful. That's what we can all aspire to be. But I just loved that idea of my goal is to be equanomous, to live equanimity, regardless of what's happening around me. To be stable in myself, but stable doesn't mean fixed and rooted. It means able to balance with shifting change.

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

So it's more like being able to surf the waves. It doesn't mean being rigid. It's just like in some martial arts when they teach you how to fall. You have to fall softly. If you go rigid when you fall, you hurt yourself. If you fall softly, you don't.

And so my invitation to you is how can you fall softly when life surprises you? How can you fall softly when circumstances change? How can you fall softly when your brain is running away with you? How can you take it all a little more in stride?

And to me, that ability to be equanimous, be the hippo with equanimity, to be equanimous, to fall softly is to release my belief that life should be or is something different than what it is. This is always what life is. It's changing circumstances we can't control, and incredible resourcefulness and resilience inside ourselves and the amazing ability to decide how we want to show up for this life that we have.

If you woke up from that coma and you had amnesia and this is what life is, you wouldn't have any belief that something had gone wrong or it should be different. You would see the beauty and the joys of this life that you have now, and you would also have some negative thoughts too because you'd still have a human brain.

This coma wasn't a stroke that removed the human part of your brain. You would still get annoyed at the person living in your house who wasn't doing what you wanted, or be frustrated that you couldn't go to the park or whatever it is, or be afraid for your health sometimes. You would still have all of that, but you would also find the joy and the beauty and the connection and the peacefulness and the happiness and all of those positive emotions that are available to you too.

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

You wouldn't have the poisonous belief that things should be different. And if you can learn how to do that, if you can learn how to accept and stop resisting whatever life is, whatever circumstances are outside of you, and cultivate that ability to fall softly and get back up, then you can handle any circumstance.

And the truth is yes, this pandemic will probably pass, whatever, we will get a vaccine, we will get treatments, and then things may go back to what they used to be like for a while, and maybe that's positive, maybe it's negative, and then something else will change globally or personally. Life is change. The universe is change. It is only an illusion that things shouldn't or don't change.

So what if you re-conceptualized what life is? That life is not having a certain set of circumstances that you like and that you think control how you feel and that you have to keep the same. What if you were just wrong about what life is? What if life is an always changing set of circumstances, but a human ability and skill and practice, what if the work of life is to practice the skill of being equanimous, of surfing the waves, of being able to fall softly and get back up over and over? What if that is the practice and the skill?

If that's the case, then anything that happens outside of you doesn't have to disturb your experience. Again, that doesn't - we're not going for I'm calm and peaceful all the time. You're going to surf those waves. You're going to have negative and positive emotion. You were well before the pandemic, and you will be well after.

So long as you're having negative and positive emotion, congratulations, you're lucky. You're still alive. You're still a human. But if we release our resistance to that, we stop believing that life should only feel good or should only look a certain way.

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

So I really want to invite you to embrace this life as if you had woken up from a coma or you were an alien who had just come to Earth. And this is just what life was and you didn't have any preconceptions about what it should be. This was your life. Now what would you do? Now how do you want to live it? Now how do you want to make the most of it?

You can release that attachment to the past and that fixation on the future. What you're left with is the ability to be present in your own life, which is all any of us want. But you will never ever get that experience by chasing a future that you can't have yet, that only exists in your mind, or living in a past that only exists in your mind.

The past and the future only exist in our minds. The present moment is all that truly exists. And the more you can release your belief that things should be different, the more you can live in that present moment. And from that moment, that's where you will be able to breathe, create, show up the way that you want to show up, appreciate the moments that you do have, be all in for that whole human experience.

Again, not just feeling blissfully grateful all the time, but also not feeling devastated all the time. Being there to surf that mix of human life moment to moment. When you get that ground work, that is when you will be able to really show up for the life that you have, which is always only whatever is truly happening and not what it used to be or what we think it should be.

So I really encourage all of you chickens to embrace this life. This is life and nothing has gone wrong. There's nothing wrong with this life other than in the human mind. So what if you chose to have this life that you have? Pro tip; you don't have a choice really.

But what if you could embrace it, embrace that this is life, this is what life was always like. It was only an illusion that it was ever different, that will

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

paradoxically give you that freedom, that expansion, that happiness that you are believing you can only have when things outside of you change.

Alright my chickens, I encourage you to keep listening to the regular podcast. If you are new, go back and listen to any of the episodes that speak to you. Don't need to be in order. Just pick an episode, whatever floats your boat, tickles your fancy.

And of course, if you want to take this work deeper and learn how to actually apply everything I'm teaching to your individual brain and get help and support and coaching in doing that, please come join us in The Clutch. There has truly never been a better time to learn how to manage your mind and to be able to look back and say, "Oh, when things really got tough during that pandemic of 2020 was the time that I really rose to the occasion and I learned how to show up as the person I want to be, and that was the time that really made me." www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. I'll see you there.

If you're loving what you're learning in the podcast, you have got to come check out The Clutch. The Clutch is my feminist coaching community for all things Unfuck Your Brain. It's where you can get individual help applying all these concepts I teach to your own life and learning how to do thought work to blow your own mind.

It's where you can learn new coaching tools not shared on the podcast that will change your life even more. It's where you can hang out and connect over all things thought work with other podcast chickens just like you and me. It's my favorite place on earth and it will change everything, I guarantee it.

Come join us at www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. Or you can just text your email address to 347-934-8861. If you text your email address to that

This Is Your Life (Turn Panic Into Peace Series #10)

number, we'll text you right back with a link to check out everything you need to know about The Clutch. 347-934-8861 or again, just go online to www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. I cannot wait to see you there.