

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

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 I have a very special treat for you today. I think it's a treat. Hopefully you'll think it's a treat too. So as some of you know and a few of you were actually there, we did Clutch College Live a few - god, was that two weeks ago? Time has lost all structure and meaning. I think it's February 1st when I'm recording this and January was 75 years long.

So we did Clutch College Live during this month, sometime in January. Clutch College Live is usually a live event in person. Obviously because of the pandemic that's not what we did. We did it online. But it's a three-day all-day event where I teach and coach live and we have amazing guest coaches come and run small groups and we go really in depth on specific topics.

You have to be in The Clutch to sign up for these. These are special additional events. Once you're inside The Clutch you're eligible to register and sign up for them. So anyway, the point of this story is one of the things that's really important to me obviously is that not every experience that I have in The Clutch is accessible to everybody.

There's space constraints, people have financial constraints, all of that. So what I asked all of our Clutch College attendees to do was to share some of their best takeaways with everybody else in The Clutch. It's really important to me that we are all in this together and that my students are always generous with each other with what they learned, just like I am generous with all of you with what I teach.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

And it's also coincidentally really good pedagogically to explain and synthesize your takeaways. It helps you learn better. So I had all the students who had attended share a couple of takeaways with everybody else in the group who couldn't attend and now I'm going to share a few of those with you.

So that way, it's like everybody gets a little bit of the wisdom that came out of that event and I really think some of these are going to resonate a lot with you. And so what I've done is I've taken a couple of the points that I taught on at Clutch College that people found the most impactful.

And it's so funny, I of course create all of this amazing content when I do a live event or when I do an online course inside The Clutch and there's workbooks and teaching and I'm teaching new tools, and there's so much amazing content and work and ideas that go into it. But then it's so often in the riffing and the live teaching that the best nuggets come up.

And so it was really interesting to look at what people's takeaways were and see that of course they kind of grew out of the content that I was teaching and the new tools that they were learning, but so many of them were those moments where I was coaching or teaching something and I just came up with like, oh, this is such a good way to explain it. And that really clicked.

So this is why I love live coaching and teaching and I will never give it up because it's in that process that often things finally click for you when you hear it a different way. So alright, without further ado, I've got a couple of takeaways here and I'm just going to sort of explain - give the takeaway and explain what I was talking about, what I was teaching.

These are takeaways that are going to make sense to you obviously, even if you were not at Clutch College, which is the vast majority of you weren't,

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

don't need to know all the specialized stuff I was teaching. These are going to be applicable to everybody.

So the first one was about something that I teach quite a lot, which is that you have to love the journey, not just try to get to the destination. Let me give you guys the example that I gave at Clutch College, which this was such a perfect example.

This was something that sort of came to me in the middle of Clutch College, like on one of the afternoons when I was done teaching. I was trying to move this really heavy box from the doorman at my building up to my apartment. And I am pretty strong, I lift weights with my trainer a couple times a week on Zoom of course, pandemic.

But I have not done that much cardio during the pandemic and in general it's not my favorite thing, I have chronic pain and it's just not my fav. So anyway, I'm pushing this big box, I'm getting out of breath because it's very heavy and it's not like a thing where I can lift it and be strong. I have to push it forward and it's cardio work.

And so I was feeling kind of short of breath, and this is what my brain said to me. My brain said, "I hate feeling out of breath. I have to start doing cardio so that I won't feel this way." And in that moment, I was like, fuck, that's exactly the wrong thought.

This is what happens so often when people set goals. Because let's think about this. If I want to increase my cardio endurance, what has to happen? I have to go make myself feel out of breath all the time, right? In order to increase cardio endurance, if I want to do that, I'm going to have to be out of breath a lot.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

Even people who are super fit get out of breath when they do cardio. That's the whole point. That's the point of the whole thing is to push yourself until you're out of breath. So to tell myself, "Oh, I hate this feeling so I should do this whole goal so that I don't feel it anymore," of course that has never worked. That has never made me want to do any cardio.

All that makes me do is hate it every time I experience it. And in that moment I was like, oh, it has to be the opposite. If I want to create more of doing cardio in my life, I have to start believing that I love feeling out of breath, that feeling out of breath is amazing. I'm a person who loves to feel out of breath. If I feel out of breath, things are going right. That's what should be happening.

I completely have to flip every way that I'm thinking about this. That was such a powerful example to me of what I mean when I say you have to love the journey. Not try to white-knuckle through the journey to get to the destination. Because whatever it is you want at the end, whatever you want as the destination, whatever you're hoping the journey will give you when you get there, you have to make the whole way feel like that.

Another example I always give is like, you can't decide to do a social media posting challenge because you think, "Well, I do 100 days of this then I won't feel rejection anymore at the end. I'll always feel confident." That's never going to work because along the way, you're going to feel insecure and rejected a lot.

So if you're telling yourself feeling insecure and rejected is bad and I hate it and I want to feel confident, so let me do this thing to try to make myself feel confident, you're going to give up because the doing of the thing feels like being insecure and being rejected.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

Or another example I always give is that I heard my teacher say once is like, if you're trying to make money to feel comfortable, it's never going to work. Because it's generally very uncomfortable to have to put yourself out there and deal with your money mindset and make offers and get rejected. We're talking about in the context of a coaching business at least.

It's uncomfortable to go out and make that money. So if you're doing it to be comfortable, you have no motivation as soon as it becomes uncomfortable, you're like, well, never mind, I was doing this to feel good and now I don't feel good so I'm going to stop. The same thing was going on with me and my breathing and cardio.

So I have been practicing for myself believing I'm someone who loves being out of breath, and every time I am out of breath, like when I work out or when I walk up a big hill or whatever, I practice thinking I love this. I'm someone who loves being out of breath.

And it has really - I see it transforming the way I think about that experience. And I'm not in a rush. I wasn't like, okay, so let me make a big ambitious workout plan, perfectionist fantasy time. No. I actually haven't set any goals yet for actual movement. I have just been reframing the way that I think about it.

And what I see is that it already changes some of my daily choices. Like if I am going for a walk, maybe I will walk up that big hill because now I've told myself I like being out of breath. So that is number one, that you have to love the journey, and in fact, the journey is going to feel like the destination. And if you are trying to get to a certain place, you have to love how it's going to feel to get there.

The second takeaway that a lot of people pointed to that they really loved was also about goals. I was coaching someone about their goals and kind

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

of how to set goals and what's the point of goals. And what I said was that goals are not shiny gold coins that you get to collect when you achieve them.

That's what we do. We set a goal and we're like, okay, when I get this goal, when I get there, then I get a gold star. That's not the point of a goal. The point of a goal is really not if you even get there or achieve it. A goal just exists to make you feel like shit so that you can learn about yourself. That was my quote and it's true.

A goal is just a tool you use to bring up all your negative emotions and feel terrible so that you can learn about yourself on the way and so that you can get better at feeling negative emotion and moving forward anyway. So it's the exact opposite. We all think I'm going to set a goal and feel good about myself. The point of this goal is to give my validation and make me feel good about myself.

No, it's the opposite. The point of the goal is to make you feel terrible. That's how you know it's working. The point of the goal is for you to feel uncomfortable and to bring up everything you need to work on.

It's so important to understand that because then when you set a big goal, what happens is people set goals because they want to feel good about themselves and then they start the process and they're like, I don't feel good about myself, I feel terrible, this must be going wrong, I must be doing it wrong, it's not working, I'm going to quit.

But if you set the goal and you're like, alright, I'm ready to feel terrible about myself, let's do it, that's when you can actually just keep going. Now, that may seem like it's contradictory to the first thing I said, which is that you have to love the experience.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

But if you think about it like being out of breath is the thing that I thought was negative and I have to learn to decide to love it, it's the same thing. Feeling negative emotion come up is something that we initially think is terrible. And so the trick is we have to decide we love it.

Just like I decided to love the feeling of not having enough air in my lungs, which of course my body originally by itself is like, this is terrible, stop. But I decided no, I get to decide what to think about that sensation. I decide that I love it. I'm going to love that sensation. Same thing. When you set a big goal and you try, your brain's going to bring up a bunch of negative emotion. And then your reaction to that emotion is what matter.

So you can either react like it's a problem and it means something's gone wrong and it means you set the wrong goal, you're doing it wrong, or you should give up, or you decide ahead of time I'm someone who loves to feel uncomfortable when I go for a big goal, I'm someone who wants to bring up all my fears of rejection and failure and imposter syndrome and whatever else, I'm someone who loves to feel scared when I go after a big goal.

We can embrace that and understand that the whole point of the goal is the journey. I talk about this all the time because it just cannot be talked about enough. It's such a revolution in understanding why you do the things you do and how to set goals. And by the way, it's part of what makes decision making so much easier.

Because if you know that the whole point of any goal or decision is just for you to get to experience a bunch of stuff and learn, you just don't have to deliberate so much over which goal and what goal and what decision because you just know it's not even the point. The destination's not the point.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

It's who you're going to become and what you're going to learn on that journey. So those were two takeaways that were really kind of around goals and the journey towards the goal and kind of embracing negative emotion I thought were really powerful.

And then there were a couple that kind of clustered around the way that we talk to ourselves in a couple of different contexts. And so one is like, often what happens is people learn thought work and then they start kind of beating themselves up that they didn't know it before, which of course is totally irrational. How would you know something you don't know?

Or sort of wishing I wish I had known it; my life would have been so different. And I always like to think it's amazing that I did all the shit I did in my life before I knew about thought work. Like, I accomplished some stuff. I did some good in the world, I had some amazing friendships and relationships, I went to these schools and worked hard, and I got this clerkship and I got this fellowship.

I did all that when I was like, bananas in my brain, when I had no idea what was going on up there or how to control it at all. So if I could do all of that when I didn't know how to manage my mind, imagine what I could do now that I do know how to manage my mind.

It's like a way of taking credit for it and ownership for everything you accomplished in the past. And rather than rebuking yourself for not having learned something yet, acknowledging that it's actually amazing what you were able to do without even having this skill set.

This switch in that way of thinking is so important. It is actually - I would say that switch is what I credit with taking my business from \$26,000 in my first year of full-time coaching to \$200,000 my second year. That thought shift is responsible for almost 10X-ing my business revenue.

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

Because what was going on was, I had a few clients, I was doing a lot of sort of trying but not really trying. Like posting on social media, I did tell people, I sent out an email to everyone I knew, but I was not - I hadn't done my podcast I was procrastinating on, I was telling myself I couldn't understand Facebook marketing.

I was not really trying. And I sort of realized that I was not really trying. But instead of beating myself up about how I wasn't really trying, I just said to myself, "Well, you've done okay without really trying that hard. You've already made more than some life coaches ever make. This is your first year of running a business, you don't know anything, your mind is partially managed, not even close to half, but you've still managed to accomplish this much, so what would happen if you just actually tried? What would happen if you just actually managed your mind somewhat a little bit more and actually tried to do it instead of half-assing it and then telling yourself you're not doing well enough?"

And that was really the switch from year one to year two for me was going from it's not working, I can't, and I don't know, to you know, it's going okay given that I'm not really giving it my all so what if I just tried giving it at least three quarters, even if not my all, and see what that does. I was able to produce these results without really trying, without really managing my mind about this, well, now I know I can do even more amazing things now that I do have these tools if I am willing to go all in on that.

And this really connects to one of the other big takeaways that I think is so important. I was so glad that my students really saw and understood this, which is the value of presenting your results to yourself in the most amazing way you can in any area of your life.

So this is something that one of my students Kori, who's a Clutch coach is kind of infamous for and I make her tell this story at every Clutch College.

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

Or every opportunity. Just because it's so classic and perfect. So I used to have a small group program called Unfuck Your Brain and we had a couple of retreats.

And at the last retreat for that program, Kori was at that retreat and I was coaching her about making money in her business. And she had made - well, first of all, she was so busy underselling herself that she told me she had made \$12,000 in her business that year. It turned out she actually later realized she'd made like, \$14,500.

But she was so busy discounting her own work to herself that she gave me the wrong number, but she'd told me she'd made \$12,000, whatever it was. And told me all of her thoughts about why that wasn't enough, it wasn't enough to live on and she hadn't met her goal and it wasn't the amount she'd invested in whatever training.

Of course, her brain had been very busy coming up with all the reasons it wasn't good enough, it wasn't enough. And she was sort of like, giving me the like, if you do it by the hour, I've only made this much per hour this year. And I was like, "Kori, this is the exact wrong way to think about this."

You cannot hate on the money you've already made and the work you've already done and expect that to produce good results for you. Your job is to make this sound as impressive to yourself as possible. You need to love your - in fact, for her I told her to think of every quarter as a gumdrop or a gum ball.

Imagine 12,000 times four, if there's a quarter in every dollar, whatever that is, 12 times four is 48. I was like, 48,000 gum balls. That's so many. It sounds silly but it's an incredibly important truth, which is we are always especially as women because we're socialized to do this, discounting our

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

own achievements, discounting our own accomplishments, looking for ways to undermine what we've done.

Women are taught that it is unfeminine and unladylike to brag, to think well of yourself, people don't like it, women shouldn't be arrogant, women shouldn't be self-confident really, women shouldn't talk about what they've done, you're going to make other people feel bad, you're going to seem like you have a big head, you're too big for your britches, who do you think you are?

Women are constantly taught to downplay their own success, to be self-deprecating, to always explain something away. Whatever it is. "Oh, you look nice today." "Oh, I like your dress." "Oh, this old thing," right? "Oh wow, that's a really impressive job you have, you must be so successful." "Oh no, I just got lucky and I work hard."

Constantly underselling, constantly undervaluing ourselves. Your job, if you want to create more of anything in your life, is to present to yourself the most amazing way you can of seeing your results. If it's about making money, you need to be thinking about what is the most impressive way of putting this.

I think one of the biggest differences for me from most coaches and one of the reasons that my business was successful in the beginning is that I was always looking for how it was the most impressive. When I signed my first client, which meant at the time \$1500 was all I'd ever made in my coaching business, I didn't say to myself, "I've only made \$1500 in my whole coaching business."

I did whatever the math was on the hourly and said, I'm a - whatever, I don't know what the math is now. Whatever six into \$1500 is. But whatever, let's say it's \$350. I like that I was able to do that other math but this one

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

I'm like, who can say? There's no way of knowing what is \$1500 divided by six.

But whatever it is, I was just constantly calculating the best way to look at my numbers. Like oh wow, when I'm coaching, I'm making this much an hour. I'm a \$500 an hour coach. I'm a coach who signs three clients in one week.

If you sign three clients in a week and that's the only week the whole month you sign clients, you can either tell yourself I only signed three clients this month, I didn't even sign one a week, or you can say, "I'm someone who signs three clients a week. In a week I signed three clients in one week."

One of those feel amazing and makes you feel like a badass and confident and like you can go out and do it again, and the other one feels terrible. This does not only have to be in a business. It can be in anything. I was just doing this in relationship stuff the other day because I have been doing a lot of work on my romantic relationships and up-leveling the way that I show up in them.

And I noticed my brain kind of going to this like, oh, well you have this old pattern come up so you're not making any progress. And I was like, nope, I made it two months this time without losing my shit about that thing. That's amazing, that is longer than I've ever made it before without having that thought pattern come up.

Always looking for the best way. I'm always looking for the way to be most impressed with myself and my results and my work. It does not mean that I end up thinking I'm better than everyone else and that I don't need to work or anything.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

It means that the more that I identify as someone who's getting amazing at being in this kind of relationship, or somebody who's becoming amazing at being a coach and starting a business, or somebody who is a really well-paid architect, whatever it is, look for the ways to present your results to yourself in the most amazing way you can.

That is always going to be beneficial. And your brain will tell you that you're getting away with something somehow. No, this is how you create more of it. You don't create more of anything in your life from thinking you don't have enough. You only will create more from believing you already are doing an amazing job at it and you want to keep doing that.

So always be looking for how to present your results in the most amazing way. So that leads me to the last takeaway I want to share. There's so many good ones but this episode can't be six hours long. So here's the last one because it really totally syncs up with that.

The last takeaway is about how you're going to show up when you're thinking about who you want to become. So those of you who listen to the interview I did with Corinne Crabtree, one of the things she said was that she had watched me get coached a lot over the years and that one of the things that struck her was that she had never seen me fight for my limitations.

I want to cry every time I talk about this. That no matter how much she's seen me get coached and how much I was struggling and how hard of a time I was having understanding the coaching, which happens to all of us, I was always fighting to try to understand it and try to move myself forward. I was always fighting for the person that I want to be and not fighting to hold on to my limiting beliefs.

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

And that was how I closed Clutch College and what I wanted to teach all my students and what I want to teach all of you also. You get to decide, are you going to fight for your potential or are you going to fight for your limitations?

I'm using the word fight because it's sort of like when you're getting coached, often it's like, you can either be really trying to understand what the coach is telling you and get your mind around who you could be, or you can be trying to argue with the coach to show them why you're stuck the way you are.

But you don't have to use the word fight if you don't like it. I also talk about it as like, are you on the side of your potential? Are you on the side of your future self? Are you making the argument for your future self and for your potential? Are you using your brain to try to come up with all the evidence you can for being your future self and to sort of use all that creativity for your belief about your potential and who you can become?

Or are you going to fight for your limitations? Are you on the side of your limitations? Are you going to use all that creative mental energy you have to justify why you're limited and why you're stuck?

And it was really such a profound moment for me when Corinne said that to me because like anybody else, I have a self-critical brain, and that was not something I had ever appreciated in myself. When she said that, I really saw how that was so true, and that I think that is one of the secrets to my success in any area of my life and really just sort of my success with thought work.

Why have I been able to change so much about my life in a relatively short period of time? It's not because it comes easy. It's not because I don't falter, it's not because I don't get stuck, it's not because of any of that. My

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

brain is a mess. I just got coached by my coaches today and I was like, I lost my mind for 36 hours this weekend. I'm somewhat back now.

I'm with all of you. We are all having the same human experience. But what I do think is different about me is that I am always fighting for that potential. I am always, always believing in the person I can become and striving for that and I think that what keeps us stuck is that we are fighting for our limitations.

And that is also something we are so socialized to do as women is to stay small and play small and hide our light under a bushel and see all of our flaws and don't take up too much space and don't get too ambitious and don't try to have a big, rich, amazing life. That's for men. That's not for women.

You don't want anyone thinking that you think you're better than them or that you deserve more than you have. And so we fight for our limitations and for our beliefs about what's possible for us. And I want you all to fight for your potential, who you want to become.

Put your energy into that. It doesn't mean that you'll always get there immediately or that you even understand how to get there, but it means that's the side you're on. You're on the side of your future self. You are here today showing up to fight for the possibility of your future self, rather than being here on and showing up to fight for your limitations and to argue for your limitations and to be on the side of believing that you can't have a different life if you want one. So that's what I left the Clutch College students with and that is what I'm going to leave all of you chickens with today.

One last thing I want to share with y'all. This is a note that I got from a podcast listener and I asked her permission to share it with you and she

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

said yes obviously. I asked her permission and she said no and I'm sharing it anyway. No. I asked her permission and she said yes, I'm sharing it.

So here's what she said because I think it will speak to a question that a lot of you guys said. She said, "I've been listening to you for many years now. I started listening to the podcast in 2018 and I even listened to The Lawyer Stress Solution." That was the previous name of this podcast, back when I only coached lawyers.

"Even though it had absolutely no relevance to me while I was working on growing my real estate business, except of course that thought was proven wrong instantly because those episodes most certainly did have relevance to me. I got just as much from those episodes as I did when it became Unfuck Your Brain, so I highly recommend anyone else listen to those early episodes too.

I was in a pretty dark place mentally and I didn't really know where to start to change the way I thought about life, others around me, and most importantly, myself. I started going to therapy, which helped, but I needed a constant soundtrack to basically tell me everything's going to be okay, you got this, you should stay on this path.

To this day, I listen to new episodes pretty much as soon as they come out but back then, I was so hungry for further growth that I listened to episodes over and over and over again to make sure I got the most out of them, which is funny because in last week's episode, that's exactly what you suggested.

Even with all of that, it took me until January 2021 to finally join The Clutch. My honest thought about not joining was something along the lines of, well, I listen to the podcast and it's helped me tremendously and there can't be that much more value in joining The Clutch than what I'm getting out of the

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

podcast. Boy, was I wrong.” She has that in all caps. Emphasis, boy, was I wrong.

“I have been diving deep into the coaching tools ever since I joined this amazing community and truly without The Clutch, I would never have grasped how to do this effectively by just listening to the podcast alone. It turns out you are totally right when you say that you take the work deeper in The Clutch. Long story short, this work is truly life changing and I’m so excited to continue to apply these lessons that I have learned to my life every single day. Thank you so much for creating such an amazing set of tools and community that women can use to change the fucking world.”

So I totally cried when I read this. And there are so many things I love about this that I wanted to share with you all. The first one is the way that this chicken was combining coaching and therapy. It’s a question that comes up a lot. As if they’re sort of two very different things that shouldn’t be used together, or it’s one or the other.

I also love that she listened to the podcast over and over again because oftentimes you really need so much reinforcement to really be able to change your thought patterns, like going to a session with a therapist once a week, that’s an hour of a whole week.

And when you can listen to the podcast on repeat, and even better, if you join The Clutch and you can have things you’re practicing every day and community to be talking to every day, you’re going to make so much more progress because you’re just getting so much more exposure. Your brain is getting so much more immersion in it.

I love that she re-listened to the episodes, which I totally recommend. And I love that she was so honest about why it took her so long to join The Clutch. I love that she shared that thought, which probably a lot of you also

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

have. That the podcast has already helped you and like, what could the difference really be?

And I love that she explained there is such a big difference between just listening to the podcast and joining The Clutch. It's like night and day. The podcast is amazing. Obviously, I love this podcast. I've been doing it every single week for free for four years, so I love it and I believe in it.

But it's not the same thing as having access to a whole library of coaching tools and workbooks and exercises and having expert coaching on demand from coaches and having access to a community of women doing the work to support you and talk it through. It's just a totally different experience that completely up-levels and takes it deeper for you.

And now is an amazing time to join The Clutch because we are going to be opening up registration soon for our next Clutch College Live, which are three-day events that we do live online these days. In the future hopefully we'll get to be in person again someday. But we will be doing one in May that is live online.

And it's a small group event where we dive deep into a couple of topics. So the one coming up in May we're going to be working on the coaching model that I teach and how to both deal with negative emotion and change negative thoughts, but also create positive thoughts and positive emotion on purpose.

We're going to be working on setting big goals and achieving them, handling everything that comes up along the way, so you actually set yourself up for success, and we're going to be working on relationships. Any relationship you have, how to increase connection, decrease conflict, decrease your anxiety, and cultivate a better relationship in any kind of setting or any kind of relationship you have.

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

UFYB 177: Best Teachings from Clutch College - Goals, Results, and Your Future Self

So if you want to come to that event, you have to be in The Clutch in order to attend. And they sell out pretty quickly. We really limit the size to that everybody gets lots of personal attention. So it's always an amazing time to join The Clutch because it truly will up-level anything that you've learned from the podcast, like Caitlyn explained.

But now is a particularly good time to join because you will have a chance to try to sign up for one of these spots at a live event. So if you want more info, you can go to unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch or you can text your email to +13479348861. That's +1349348861. Just text your email and we will send you the info. Or you can go to unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch and Caitlyn and I will see you in 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 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.