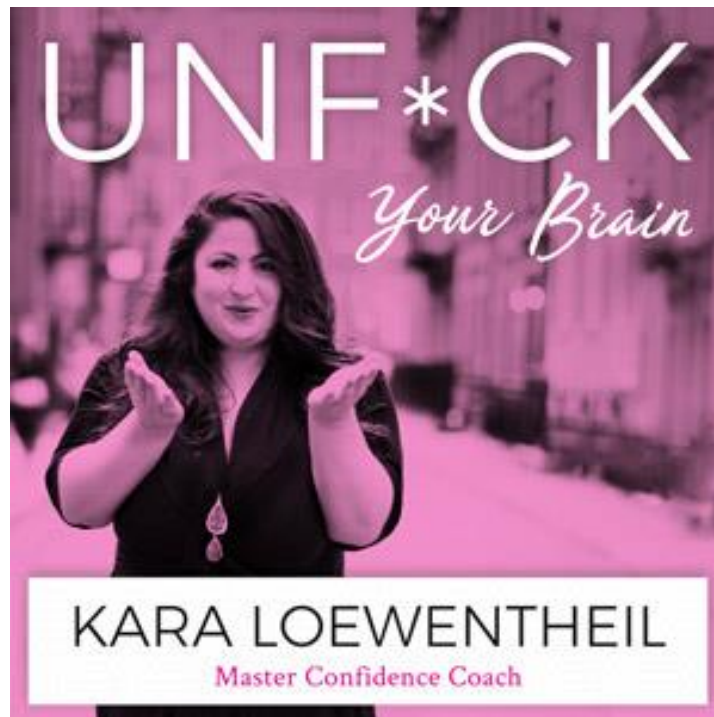


UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

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. Today we are going to be continuing the conversation that we started on the podcast last week. All the same guest stars are here. We just basically recorded one very long conversation but we cut it into two episodes because it's just so dense and meaty and interesting. And I really wanted you guys to be able to digest.

So before we jump back into that, I just want to remind you that if you want the free Confidence Cheat Sheet I offer, which will help you build up your self-confidence, I'm going to tell you how to get that. I think especially in reference to these episodes, one of the things that I found so fascinating in these conversations is that while we think of online accountability processes/call in/call outs/cancelation, whatever term we use, and I always feel like I have to use all the possible terms because I want us to have a conversation about what even the differences are between those things and what's accurate and what do they really mean, we talk about all that in these episodes.

But one of the things I thought was so fascinating about these conversations is that we are always afraid of being criticized by our in-group, and we talk about this in the episode that my students who are Black women were afraid of being “canceled” by other Black people, that as a feminist I was afraid of being “canceled” by other feminists.

And that's not about the circumstance. That's about our thoughts. And so I think that self-confidence is one of the themes that runs through both of these episodes, and we talk about that quite a bit. What does it look like to

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

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

show up with self-confidence, how can you hear critique when you do have your own back and you have self-confidence, how you respond to it when you do.

And so I wanted to make sure that you all actually have some tools to help you with your self-confidence. Obviously, everything I teach is kind of about that. But I have the specific freebie called the Confidence Cheat Sheet that not all of you know about.

So if you want that, you can text your email address to +13479971784. Again, that's +13479971784. And when you get asked for the codeword, you just text back confidence. Or you can go to unfuckyourbrain.com/confidence. But either way, that will give you three really concrete practices, tools, exercises that you can use to build up your self-confidence. Alright, let's dive back into it.

—

Brenda: You know, I want to share something. I was actually watching last night - this might seem initially very unrelated but I promise you...

Kara: We trust you, Brenda. Take us wherever you want to go.

Brenda: Let's do it. So last night I was watching on Apple TV, I think that's where it was, there's this documentary called The Year Earth Changed. Have any of you seen it?

Kara: No.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Brenda: So it's all about this past whole year, starting from when the pandemic started, and it's fascinating and it talks about how nature changed in that year that we all as humans stopped flying as much, stopped driving as much, stopped being out in the cities as much.

And it was so, so fascinating to watch. I mean, little things like they showed examples of how in San Francisco, there was this huge reduction all over the world, but they were giving this one specific example. And it was so cool to see. You could see the Golden Gate Bridge in the background and they were telling the story of this one specific kind of bird and how because of the noise pollution is down, now this bird, they're able to do their mating call now and they can hear each other now more.

And because of that, they reproduced more, they were singing in ways they hadn't been singing since the 1950s. So over seven decades. And they went and pulled so many stories all over the world like that. There also was a story that they shared about in India, how one morning they woke up and there's normally such pollution that the people that lived there didn't even realize when the smog clears out or the pollution clears out, you can actually see the Himalayas.

So this morning, they're telling the story of how everyone woke up and they're like, wow, mountains. And it seriously gives me goosebumps. And they could see it and they hadn't seen that ever. And they've lived there their whole lives.

So anyway, I was just watching this and I think the reason I'm inspired to share this example is because there's complexity of this. I'm listening to this and they're sharing all these stories about even the whales, how because there's less boat travel, because there's less tourism, they can now communicate more.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

So many examples, and yet it's not black and white that we would say well, let's just all stay in lockdown forever because the animals. There's just such complexity and I think in fact even just from the work we've done in our feminist coach certification with you, that for me is - just feels like such a valuable thing to bring to any conversation, including the one we're having right now where it's like, when I'm watching this documentary about the animals and they give examples about the turtles mating because there's not all the people on the beach and even species that were close to being extinct, things are just not black and white simple and it's one of those conversations where that's a powerful stance to have, to be able to tap into, where I think we can give ourselves space and each other space. Not that we don't hold people accountable. I see the use of that, but yeah, it's just not so simple.

Kara: I'm such a good proponent of let's just tell the truth about what we're doing or thinking to ourselves. There's something about even the phrase hold someone accountable, what if we just make the phrase, I want to hold you accountable to what I think is the right thing and what I think you should do.

That's the truth. And that doesn't even mean you shouldn't try to do that. If I see someone beating someone up on the street, I'm probably going to try to hold them accountable to my belief that they should stop doing that and I'm going to yell stop and whatever. But of course the truth is I don't know why they're doing that and maybe to them they had a really good reason. I have no idea.

Maybe when they beat that guy up the whales will have more time to mate. I don't know what's going to happen or what the repercussions are. But it's almost like just part of I think the black and whiteness comes from this idea

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

that well, I have to be 100% right and you have to be 100% wrong in order for me to be allowed to tell you that I disagree with you. It's so extreme.

There's something about that and human thinking that to me, that's actually all that internalized patriarchy and white supremacy and all those other forms of oppression, which is like, we doubt ourselves so much that then we have to double-down on this certainty that we're right in order to be allowed to say what we think about someone else's behavior or thoughts or ideas they're putting out in the world or their impact or whatever.

Amber: It's that both and, right? Like they're either or. You're either right or wrong as opposed to both - both of us are both right and wrong. That both and for all of it.

Brig: I was thinking about like, is this the first time we've had cancel culture? Who was the guy who said the Earth was round?

Kara: Galileo.

Amber: Galileo. Definitely canceled.

Brig: Right? He got canceled, right?

Kara: Humans have always been like, let's go after the people who don't agree with us.

Brenda: And he was right.

Brig: And he was right, exactly. But he thought differently but yet they canceled him. And then if you think about Salem witchcraft hunt, that was a

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

lot of rightness in my opinion to some of the things, but a lot of the women got canceled by white patriarchal - so it's this fear but yet, we act as if it's just starting but it's been around.

I guess it's because of social media now we have more access to it, but it's more dopamine, but we have more dopamine going because of everything right now. So our brains are way more in that lower brain mostly, looking for things. And maybe it's to talk about that excitability of our brain where we are right now as a society too. Why are we more susceptible to it?

Kara: That's also interesting what you're bringing up is like, this is always a question of social justice movements. Is equality that we get to now do the things that were done to us? So okay, the Salem witches were oppressed and abused and hung. And of course, obviously we want to be really clear, none of us are saying that being mad at Rachel Hollis for what she says is the same as hanging a witch.

The consequences are - and I know you didn't mean that Brig. On a podcast you got to spell it all out so you don't end up with a 60-second clip that takes things out of context. Obviously, these things are different, and the ways people used to get - we're using cancellation in a light way to describe a whole host of consequences that have happened to people for thinking in certain ways and obviously what's happening now is not as bad as what was happening then. They're not the same thing.

But I do think there is - this is the argument that prison and carceral abolitionists would make about accountability processes and culture, which is sort of like if everybody's redeemable, then everybody's redeemable. And if punishment doesn't cause change, then punishment doesn't cause change and it's not different based on who you are or what your following is

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

or how much money or resources you have. Then that’s also a very black and white position.

I’m not saying that that’s right. But I just think there are all these different perspectives. Even this conversation is such a perfect example. We’re never going to get a certified letter from the universe about whether online accountability discourse is actually a productive, meaningful, and proportional response to systemic injustice, or if it is a punitive carceral attempt to have mob mentality.

We’re never getting a ruling. So we have to decide. The more we can do to be like, none of us got a certified letter from the universe that says that we’re right, it’s our thoughts, that would at least lighten it a little. I feel like one thing is coming up in this conversation and I’m curious what you guys think is this distinction between the emotional aspect of this, which is like, the fear people have about it, the way people get off on it the desire to control other people to feel better, the desire for other people to make you feel better for apologizing for your suffering, or to make other people suffer.

Let’s not pretend that isn’t a human instinct. We’ve all wanted to make our loved ones suffer, much less people on the internet sometimes. That’s a real thing that humans do. So there’s the emotional side and that goes in many directions, and then there’s the like, are there actual actions and reparations or changes that people need to make in order to atone for our idea of what they’ve done wrong, or for harm they’ve caused.

I’m just curious what you guys think of that distinction. I do feel like maybe part of the reason these conversations are all over the place is that all those things are being mixed up and been given the same weight. Are you going to donate a million dollars of the wealth you got from profiting off of other people’s labor to good causes, and/or are you going to apologize in a

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

way where I believe you're sincere? Those things are not the same thing. And maybe should not be conflated in the same way.

Amber: Well, on the emotional side, I think there's that just carnal instinct to be a part of the in-group, like don't get kicked out of the party or else you'll die. And it's like, that has exacerbated in the time and age that we live in. If we get kicked out of a group, we're not going to die but we still have that fear that oh my god, so many bad things are going to happen if these people don't accept me.

And I think just driving towards being accepted or not being kicked out or not being canceled or being held accountable or whatever you want to call it is driving that emotional side of it. And it's easy to conflate. Because sometimes people do need to be held accountable for some things. But every shouldn't be held accountable by their worst mistake ever, that one thing they said that one time 10 years ago, or all those things. And that fear coming up is like, anything I've ever done wrong is going to be put on a spotlight and I'll get kicked out and die.

Kara: Which is just our own thoughts, right? A lot of people are running around way before this thinking if I did one thing wrong then I'm terrible and irredeemable and I'm not good enough. So it's like, we're just projecting I think that common thought pattern. I don't feel like I'm educated enough about all the examples to be able to give examples, but it does sort of strike me - when I think about now why am I not so worried about being “canceled,” I mean, yes, it is the self-work.

And also, I'm sort of like, well, number one, I just have done a lot of work on this stuff so I don't feel super defensive. So if you want to tell me that I said something the wrong way or that I did something that you don't think

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

aligns with my values or your values, I’m willing to hear that and make my own decision.

And I think - and maybe this is magical thinking, but I sort of feel like I have a long track record now in my business of trying to live according to the values that I state. And I think the stereotype about these things is that well, you can be living a blameless life and you do one thing wrong and then you’re destroyed. But is that really true? Or is it more like you sent 100 racist tweets?

Or is it more like with the Rachel Hollis example, is it like this is the third or fourth time people have been trying to have this conversation with you? Is it really just the one thing? I think black and white thinking add to this idea - it’s almost like it’s activating our prey animal brain, where we’re like, oh my god, if one thing tries to eat me then I’m dead, as though that’s really what’s going to happen when I’m not sure that that is really how it operates. But I don’t know, I’m curious what you guys think.

Brenda: I don’t even think this is an answer to what you’re...

Kara: That’s fine. We’re all just spit balling here. Obviously, this podcast is not like, here’s a cohesive theory of accountability callout processes. That’s not what we’re doing.

Brenda: I had actually thought about Galileo too this morning Brig. Great minds think alike, I guess. But sometimes very different. This is actually what I was going to say. So he had this idea that the Earth was round, and also, I don’t know the exact history on that but I was just thinking about ourselves. I consider myself a thought leader and I think all of us do.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

And so he was a thought leader in that case, meaning he had a thought that was different than everyone else's, and he's like, here it is, here's what I think. I do think as a thought leader, it's kind of like the willingness to do that. Not necessarily actually - what did we call it?

Kara: Accountability discourse.

Brenda: Accountability discourse. But just the idea of like, I'm a thought leader, plus I am actually willing to put out thoughts and ideas and work that is different that tons of people are going to be like, what? Just disagree with. And not like. And that's what a thought leader does, right?

Kara: The other thing that's coming to mind for me as I'm thinking about this - and I know Brig had something she wanted to say is when people are getting “canceled,” when an accountability process is happening, I don't think it's usually because they have a new idea that people don't like. It's because they're embodying very long oppressive ideas like it's fine for me to have sex with underage women, or it's fine for me to have racial stereotypes, or it's fine for me to speak dismissively about people who have less money and opportunities that I do or whatever.

Brenda: That's a really good point because actually I just put this together right now, the reason my brain goes there is because for me, when I'm afraid of putting stuff out, it's me actually just being a thought leader. And so I love that you just made that distinction, even just for me and my brain. Like okay, you might put something out, someone might disagree with it, not like it, whatever, but yeah, what you're describing is completely different.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Kara: I mean, I think at least when it's operating the way that we think seems valuable, which is marginalized people trying to call in or out people with more resources because they're perpetuating a systemic problem, as opposed to having a new idea that people don't like. But for sure, there's some of it going on because the more horizontal version of people don't like each other's ideas and decide that that way of thinking or talking is problematic or is violent or is abusive or whatever.

And those terms becoming so capacious, meaning so many different things, that people are all over the place about it. What were you going to say Brig? Sorry.

Brig: I think for me I keep going back more so to the personal one than the structural one. And so I wanted to share a personal experience of how cancel culture within me and just share a little story. I have a group of friends and travel together, we do everything together. And then I did something to one of the friends that wasn't cool. I coached her without her permission but I was a baby coach...

Kara: It's so hard not to in the beginning.

Brig: Right. And it was a horrible experience for her and she repelled against me. So for me, it was that cancel culture but within that one little tight group. And so this is how I came up with my ideas of it by going through this experience.

And the more she repelled away, the more I tried to, "But wait, but really, I'm not like this." And I kept showing up more desperate because all of my attachment was like, if I leave this group, something's going to happen bad

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

for me. I won't be able to travel, I won't be able to have fun. I was making this mean so much.

And so of course the more I tried to fix it, the weirder I got. And it just repelled her more and more away. And once I finally coached myself, dropped all the attachment and was like, I love her and I can love her wherever, and I forgave myself and it's okay and I just show up, then it was like, I accepted an accountability for yes, I did that to you and it was wrong and apologized to it and took ownership of it and just said, hey, I'm human.

I do some stupid shit sometimes. And so I think with cancel culture, it's like, I think it's that humanness. When you get the call out or when something happens, like oh, I'm human, this happened. But I think this goes back to your performative thing. When they're doing it just to - the desperate is so inauthentic. It just propels more people away. As opposed to doing exactly what we want as a coach, which is to see real change. But that is really internal. I had to do that work internally.

Kara: I think that goes back to - it is that self-acceptance piece. You can see when people are called in or called out, and yeah, obviously some call in and call outs are delivered with more love or less love in different ways. But that defensiveness, that digging in, that trying to ignore it, it's like treating it as this sort of social ill or danger that's happening to you.

It's like people's primitive brains activate, then they start to treat it like it's a threat, then they start to respond like it's a threat. But they're creating all of that internal drama, and then of course the result is more and more drama on the outside too and making it worse and worse.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

As opposed to it's so interesting to think like, what would happen if you were a public figure and you were called out for something that you did and you gave it a lot of self-reflection and you truly and honestly were like, I completely understand these thought processes and these values, I don't agree with them, here's why I did it this way, this is what I truly believe and I have the receipts to back that up and how I've shown up.

I don't know, you might still get a lot of pushback but it does just feel like you would have a different experience. That sort of the way you respond when you're like, "Oh my god, I'm under threat, I have to hunker down or attack," or whatever.

Brig: Yeah. Because when you were asking about the feelings and emotions, it's like, you do feel threatened. It's primal. It's threatened. It's danger. It's survival. It's urgent and it's very visceral, those thoughts, those feelings.

Kara: Our brains are often wrong about that stuff, right? That's why those who oppose this stuff aren't all right either. Because just because you feel threatened doesn't mean something is actually a threat. That's the whole point of thought work is your brain is wrong.

Brig: Are you trying to say it's all made up?

Kara: I think culture is maybe made up of thoughts and actions. The other thing that's coming up for me as you're talking Brig is like, I feel like a lot of these things are coalescing into a couple of themes, one of which is like, when it's this vertical, more call out of R. Kelly needs to stop abusing underage women, that call out, the point is not to change R. Kelly's behavior.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

It's not like we're trying to help him with his personal development. The point is whatever's been tried behind the scenes hasn't worked. He needs to experience consequences because we need to protect people from him.

And in that case, because as coaches I think sometimes we want to be like, well, shame doesn't change people's behavior, so this approach is not going to change people's actual hearts and minds. But not all accountability processes really should be thought of in the same way. Because some of them are not about changing someone's heart and mind. They're about whatever it is, public signaling, economic impact on them, it's a cultural show that needs - I don't mean show like it's not doing a real thing.

I just mean you're trying to change their behavior or bring legal attention to it or hit them in the pocketbook where it hurts or whatever. But then I think the place that I see more of a problem is when it is this more horizontal like, you and your friends or people in your community or whatever it is. You're not going to produce true understanding and behavior change through shame, through black and white thinking, through that process.

And so I think to me, those are like, if you are going to initiate or participate in an accountability process of some kind, any project or meeting, be clear about what's the goal and what's the way to get there. And as you were saying earlier Brig, which I think is so right, in that more personal space, sometimes you will have really clear cases.

But there's going to be a lot more cases where it's just more like, we have different ideas about how people should be, what should relationships look like, how can you talk to people or not, whatever. So it feels like there's these distinctions between action and emotion and community and as a public figure, versus private people against each other, those are all important distinctions in how we think about these things.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Brig: Yeah, that was a good way of categorizing it. I like that.

Kara: If other people don't cause your feelings, even if you are “canceled,” why is that a problem? What's going to happen? And I mean I think Amber pointed out in the beginning like, a lot of the public figures we see experiencing this, like we said, Rachel Hollis isn't living under a bridge. It's not - the outcome is not as bad as people act like it is.

But I actually think in that interpersonal context, it is more emotionally stressful for people because your own community, that fear of being rejected, and it's hard to economically impact Rachel Hollis. It's not that hard to economically impact someone in a smaller community where whatever, you have more ties. Also interesting.

You guys have anything else that you think we need to talk about or you want to say about this? It's really just free association time. This is also juicy and interesting and there aren't really conclusions to be drawn. I just wanted us to be public about having a real conversation about it. I feel like most coaches are like, don't look at it in the fact and it won't get us.

Brig: Totally. And I think all three of us when we were talking, Brenda, Amber, and of course Kara, we know you have put yourself out there. But I think it was one of those things where am I qualified? And just noticing that fear. And it goes back to what Amber was saying. And Brenda, you said it too is like, we literally have to be self-sufficient.

Having our own back and understanding where, when our brain is doing that and when those feelings are coming, it's like, just understand where that is coming from and just use our own thought work. Like okay, let's go to work on this and clean all of this up.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Kara: And as a member of a dominant group in the sense of my white privilege, I can say that the fear of that is directly proportional to how much you are I think feeling like you're living in integrity and aligned with your own values on this work.

I think for me, I didn't have public pushback, but what I internally went through was a part of building my business where I had values around diversity, equity, inclusion, economic accessibility, neurodiversity and accessibility and that, all these different values I had that I wasn't fully acting on.

I'm neither making excuses nor shaming myself for that. That's just where I was, that's what my thoughts were, I was building the business, I hadn't gotten to dealing with my own brain about it. But then once I started dealing with that, the more that I have done that work, the less I fear - even though in some ways I'm putting myself out there more as saying I believe in these things, in some ways it's inviting more critique of like, you say you believe in economic accessibility and okay, you have Clutch scholarships but why is this thing still expensive?

I'm putting myself out there more. But I feel much more secure about it because I feel so much more like, I never claim to be perfect or that - I'm clearly still running a business, not a non-profit. I don't claim to be perfect at this but I know that I'm taking steps and doing things that matter to me and putting myself behind my values.

And so what we're really truly fearing is our own self-cancellation. It's our own shame and terror that what other people will say about us is true and that we will have to hate ourselves. And when you clean that stuff up, it just all feels so much less dramatic. You just don't feel as much like this is a thing to worry about.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Brenda: I feel the same. Or what I would add to that is as I was doing - especially in all of the business-building process and all of it, but especially in the past couple months that I've seen the biggest growth is like, in my brain I just decided I am willing to have people have whatever opinion and disagree and judge or whatever. And where I land is honestly so yummy but also really rock solid is I know me, I love me, I won't cancel me.

Kara: If you want to, that's your business, but I'm not going to.

Brenda: Oh my gosh, I actually have to share this example that you and I talked about this Kara. I have all these epiphany moments really when I just discover a new way of thinking about something. But I was thinking about I love rap music and really, the most ratchet tons of cuss words, I love that rap music.

So one time I was listening - oh my gosh, what was I listening to? I can't remember exactly what it was but I was listening to it and I was thinking, do you know what, I'm so sure rap artists don't sit around thinking about if someone who loves country music is going to cancel them and not buy their...

Kara: What is the director of the Philharmonic think about my next album?

Brenda: Yeah. And so I just want to share that for anyone who might find it useful. Because it's like, okay, I just get to do my work in the world and share what's been useful for me, and some people are going to be into it and other people actually just probably cancel me all the time. And I say that in like, totally the light version of the word.

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Cancel me as in just not interested, disagree, don't like it, unfollow. And we laughed about that when I thought about it because it is a little bit of swagger too. It's like okay, this is just how I'm doing what I do and the way you were describing when you really feel of course, still human, totally. I'm pretty sure everyone said that and so just add me to the list. I'm an imperfect human. Let me just say that publicly. But we can still do awesome things as imperfect humans. But yeah, just came down to I know me, I love me, I won't cancel me.

Kara: And being so public about that. I'm like, hi, yes, I'm Kara and sometimes I'm a hypocrite. We all are. Do I care about child labor? I do. Is this an iPhone? Yes it is. I'm not pretending that I am somehow living this - we talk so much in this certification like, our job as coaches is to make space for people to love themselves even when - not to just believe everything is perfect and there's no such thing as a mistake if I don't believe there is.

Yeah, that's true, but also you can just believe you fucked it up and did something wrong and still totally love yourself, and what would that look like? That's the key. And I feel like if everybody did that, we would have less fuckups that people need to be held accountable for and we would have less uses of the process that aren't as helpful.

Because if everybody was in that space, it would have so much less of the component that's about people acting out emotional things, rather than actually - well, there's some concrete changes or things we need to make in the world.

Amber: I was just thinking that that's why it's so important the distinction you gave between the vertical and the horizontal. Because I think the vertical is where the accountability work really comes in, but the horizontal

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

is where the self-work really comes in. And having your own back and knowing that even if somebody else doesn't like you, everything will be okay.

My personal story with this is my first consult with someone that I didn't know, it was a referral, and she was a Black woman, right up my alley, my target market, and I bombed it. I didn't know how to talk to my people yet. I was still talking in a way that I learned from a different silo that did not work for my people.

And she was giving feedback and she was disagreeing with stuff. And I was like, no, no, no, it works like this. And she looked at me like, “Bitch, you have no idea what you're talking about.” And I was like, so scared, I was like, oh my god, nobody's going to trust me, nobody is going to think that I know what I'm doing. And when I say nobody, I mean the Black community. And I'm not going to have any clients, I'm going to die under a bridge alone.

And just being able to have my own back in that and be like, yeah, I didn't speak to her in the best way for my client, how can I go back and see what I can do differently, but also knowing that everybody out there isn't going to be for me. Everybody out there doesn't need to be for me and need to follow me or listen to me or pay me or whatever.

It's that I believe in me. Like everybody else has been saying here, I love me, I got me, I'm not going to cancel me, but that doesn't mean that I can't hold myself accountable either. And then just within the horizontal thing too, I just think there's a huge difference in, “Hey friend, what you said was sexist or homophobic or racist or whatever it was, don't do that shit anymore,” and just having that kind of conversation, versus, “Oh my god, I can't believe you said that, I'm going to tell everybody that they shouldn't be friends with you anymore and you're horrible.”

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

And it's just like, it doesn't have to be some big drama-filled thing. You can still have love and compassion for somebody that disagrees with you, doesn't share your ideas, or anything like that. And you don't have to be friends with that person if you don't want to.

Kara: Yeah, I think that's such a good example of where the life coaching aspect comes in. Because we're always teaching people you don't control other people's feelings. People don't have to agree with you for you to feel okay, and other people's emotions or words, you're the one who can hurt your feelings. You get to decide what to believe and what to feel.

And part of all this conflation of all these things happens because we're conflating material harm with what people experience as emotional harm, which we would all say is actually caused by your thoughts. So that's why it can feel like either someone in your community that you know is responsible for it, or that you want some kind of emotional atonement from a public figure that you really can't make them do.

As opposed to what your locus of control is like, I can say something publicly, I cannot patronize them, I can sign a petition, I can do whatever. But it does feel like everything, everybody's thought processes would be cleaner if we separated out what are we trying to do here, what is the actual problem, what am I thinking and feeling about this, what if this is mine to clean up, what of this do I still want to take action on? It does seem like all those conflations are what's making such a confusing mess of things.

Brig: I wanted to say one last thing which is when we were talking about how we develop I'm not going to cancel me that I think when everybody does that and we take ownership of our own feelings, then I think we open ourselves up to have true dialogue to - I think one of my things with the

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

Rachel Hollis thing is that means more people are going to be less vulnerable to share some of their thoughts and have those discussions because they're afraid of being canceled.

And so I think if we apply this to ourselves and everybody takes ownership for how they feel, I think it just opens us up to create that change that we're actually wanting, especially on that horizontal level of like, having those open dialogues. And I'm not going to cancel you because you said something that you weren't aware that could be looked at differently and we can start working on it if we open that up.

Kara: Yeah, and I think that goes back to that being honest part of it, which is like, none of us I don't think are saying and that's how you should do it. We're just saying if what you want is behavior and thought change, this is what will produce it. If what you want is to make a public statement or to do whatever, and I'm not saying any of those are better or worse, but it's like, let's be honest about what's the purpose of this process, what are we trying to achieve, which of these tools are going to help.

If you're actually trying to create true thought and feeling change in another human being, we just know from the studies even on dogs that like, shame and punishment will not work. And that's not me saying so don't ever use those. I'm just saying know what you're trying to get and what's going to produce it and be honest with yourself.

I don't give a shit if this person's thinking changes, whatever it is. I think that they should be publicly embarrassed for what they did, I think that they do need to experience economic consequences, I'm just fucking pissed, I want someone to yell at, I'm not saying any of those are invalid purposes even. Just that's why the self-examination of what am I doing here and why is always that most important question.

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

UFYB 186: (Part 2) Thought Work and “Cancel Culture”: A Conversation with Amber Taylor, Brig Johnson & Brenda Lomeli

That seems like a good place for a podcast by life coaches to end. Thank you guys so much for coming on. This was such an amazing conversation and I know we're going to keep talking about it, but I appreciate you sharing your time and energy and personal experiences with all my listeners. Thank you.

Brenda: Thanks for having us.

If you're loving what you're learning in the podcast, you have got to come check out The Clutch. The Clutch is the podcast community for all things Unfuck Your Brain. It's where you can get individual help applying the concepts to your own life.

It's where you can learn new coaching tools not shared on the podcast that will blow your mind even more. And 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 your life, I guarantee it. Come join us at www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. That's [unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch](http://www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch). I can't wait to see you there.