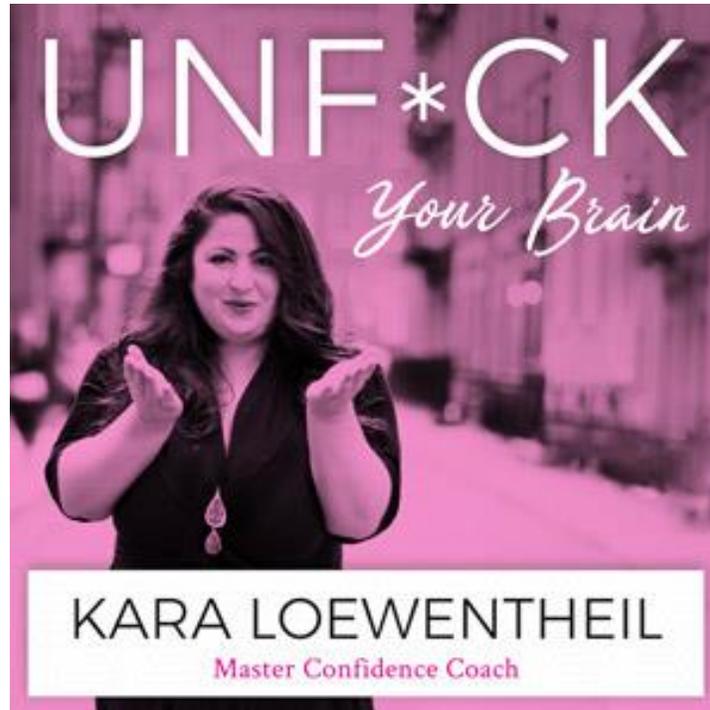


UFYB 194: QA: How Patriarchy F*cks With Your Brain



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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UFYB 194: QA: How Patriarchy F*cks With Your Brain

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. I am getting so excited. I can't make my voice go that high, especially first thing in the morning. But I am so excited for next week, which is the – drumroll – we're going to kick off the Deprogramming the Patriarchy from Your Brain Bootcamp.

So, I have been getting all of my teaching prepared, all the concepts I want to teach you, all the things I want to coach you on, all the different tips and tricks and brain hacks that I want to give you for understanding and spotting when the patriarchy has fucked with your brain. Which unfortunately, a lot of us don't even see because it's just in the water. It's in the air around us. It's like a fish not seeing the water. It's everywhere.

So, it has been so amazing getting ready for this event. I cannot wait to teach and coach my face off and coach your faces off. So, in order to set the stage for that, today we are answering some question about how patriarchal socialization does impact our brains.

And these are questions from listeners. These are real-life questions and challenges and quandaries that we are going to approach from a feminist coaching angle, so from that feminist mindset angle of how is our thinking around these things being impacted by the way that we are socialized as women.

So, to just give you a little taste of what we're going to be doing in the challenge, except that in the bootcamp, I will be teaching live though every day on Zoom, face to face with you, and coaching some of you live, which is going to be super-exciting. So, let today whet your pallet, for those of you who already signed up.

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And if you have been on the fence about it, honestly, what the – what are you on the fence about? It is such a fucking bargain. It is a steal. You should 100% have signed up already.

So, here are some questions and answers. We're talking about competitiveness, being humble, whether we should be humble or prideful. We're going to be talking about guilt and shame about paying for help, something women struggle with a lot and that really holds them back compared to their male colleagues who have no problem paying for help.

So, alright, let's dive in. And remember, you've got to go sign up for the Deprogramming the Patriarchy from Your Brain Bootcamp. If you haven't already, go do it right now. You are going to be so bummed out if you miss this. I don't want you to miss this. I don't want you to be bummed out. And I don't want you to not learn these tools and skills that are going to change your life.

So, text your email to +1-347-991-1784, and when you get prompted for the codeword, it's, "5 day challenge," written out normally, spaces in between them, "5 day challenge." Or visit unfuckyourbrain.com/5daychallenge, all one word, no spaces. And I will see you all there.

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This first one is short and sweet and a little tough love. Here's the question, "I make good money, no debt, and plenty of savings. I struggle with outsourcing activities I don't enjoy but could do, like meal prep and cleaning. I keep wanting to call this behavior wasteful or lazy."

Okay, that's the whole question. I'm going to coach you, but first, the tough love is it doesn't sound like you've coached yourself about this at all, "I keep wanting to call this behavior wasteful or lazy." Okay, have you put that in a model?

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You guys, I get a lot of questions that are like, “I just don’t even know where to start with this.” I’ve said this on one of these before. The answer is always, put it in a model, see what you get, see if you want to keep the thought or how to change it. That is literally all you have to do for any problem in your life.

Yes, I teach you other tools. It’s fun to nerd out on thought work. Sometimes those other tools help you see things in a different way. But all you ever need to do is put a thought in a model, see what result you’re getting, decide if you want to keep it or if you want to change it. That’s it.

So, when you say, “I keep wanting to call this behavior wasteful or lazy,” okay, but what are we doing about that? Are you coaching yourself about that? Have you done a model? Have you thought about whether you want to keep those thoughts and what you could think instead? You have to do the work. Alright, that’s the tough love; for all of you, not just this question asker.

So, if you put this in a model, what you would see is that, number one, you are wasting a lot of time and emotional energy quote unquote struggling with it, thinking about it, not doing it, beating yourself up. That’s a waste of time.

Number two, you don’t really know what it means for something to be wasteful or lazy. What are you going to do with that time? Number one, isn’t it a waste of time to spend time doing things you don’t want to do that you could pay someone else to do? Why isn’t that a waste of time? What would you do with that time otherwise?

I could spend eight hours a day, I guess, cleaning and cooking all the time. But I don’t want to do that and it would be a waste of my time. Not because cooking and cleaning are wastes of time if you like or want or need to do those things. Those are some people’s jobs. They’re not a waste of time.

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It's never the activity that's a waste of time in and of itself. Other than ruminating. That's a waste of time. But actual activities that keep your life working, those aren't wastes of time in and of themselves, like the activities aren't a waste of time. But it's a waste for you if you don't like doing it and have something else you want to do instead and can afford to outsource it and are willing to pay for that.

So, it would be one thing to not pay for that if you felt totally morally neutral about it and you just had done the math and you were like, "Well, there's nothing else I want to do with that time and I could use the money to do this other thing instead so I'll do it myself." That's just math.

The drama is that you obviously don't want to do it. You say you don't enjoy it. You're not coaching yourself to enjoy it. But then you're also not coaching yourself to just pay someone else to do it and not do it. That's a waste of time and energy and your brain power.

If you don't enjoy those things and you don't need to do them financially and you could use your time to do something you do enjoy or even that make you more money, then I would say it's wasteful not to outsource them. It's all just how you think about it and how you coach yourself.

But you have to actually coach yourself. You can't just stop at, "I notice that my thought is that it's wasteful or lazy and that's just where I've stopped my analysis." You need to do the model and see if we really want to keep the thoughts.

I think the worst-case scenario is to be in this place where you tell yourself that you don't like it and you want to stop doing it, but then that's wasteful and lazy. Either coach yourself to just enjoy doing those things, or be willing to do them without needing to enjoy them and stop thinking about it, or coach yourself to outsource them.

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And you've really got to look into, like, do you want to keep the belief that something's wasteful or something's lazy? Those are not circumstances. They're not objective definitions. They're just thoughts. Do you want to keep those thoughts? Where did you get them? Who taught you that it was lazy to not do your own meal prep? Do you want to keep that belief?

You get to decide what those words mean. Do you want to keep the unconscious definitions that you've inherited, and are they serving you? It doesn't seem like they're serving you here.

Okay, second question, "Hey Kara, do you believe women are inherently competitive with each other? Do you think competition can be completely one-sided? How can we apply thought work to competition and interpersonal relationships?"

Okay, no, yes, and the same way we do everything. So, no, of course I do not believe women are inherently competitive with each other. I don't think that that means anything. I don't think anybody is inherently competitive with anybody else. Competitive is just a thought.

So, you might have the thought, "I feel competitive." But also, it's just a word we would use to describe certain thought patterns like, "I want to win," or, "I need to be better than everyone else," or, "There's not enough to go around and I have to get the most and be the best. I want to be better than other people." Those are all thoughts that we might describe as being competitive.

So, competition, of course, can be completely one-sided because it's not a real thing that exists. It's just a thought in your mind. Half of us are quote unquote in competition with some girl we went to high school with 30 years ago who hasn't thought about us since, or our first boyfriend who got remarried or whatever. So, yes, competition can be completely one-sided.

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Competition is just a thought you have or it's just a word we use to describe a set of thoughts you have. So, it's probably most of the time one-sided. And then, how can we apply thought work to competition in interpersonal relationships? The same way you apply thought work to anything else. You've got to look at the thoughts.

This is also a great example, y'all, of why the more details you submit, the more effectively I can coach you. At this abstract level, I have to make up my own examples. But why do you have the thought that you need to become a vice president faster than your sister does, right? Or not why do you have that thought, but notice you have that thought and then work on that thought. That's what's creating the competitiveness is that thought.

Or why is it important to you to get to have a bigger wedding than somebody else, like, whatever this is about, the way you apply thought work to it is you just bring your awareness, bring your consciousness, do a thought download to those thoughts you have about the person or the thing you think you're competing on or with. And then you need to use the model to get familiar with those thoughts, get to know them, and then to shift them.

So, it's not a special thing that you need a special tool for. Competitive or competition is just a word to describe a set of thoughts that you can use thought work on, the same way you would on anything else.

“Hey, Kara. You talk a lot about confidence, of course, which is what brought me to your work. But I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about humility. I know a lot of chickens worry about a big head. But I don't think that's what I'm talking about. What do you think humility looks like? What role do you think it can play in managing your mind? Do you find it to be a useful concept at all? Thank you.”

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This is a great question. So, yes, I do think that humility is a useful concept when it's used correctly and appropriately. Which I don't think that's how most women use it.

So, I think most women use humility as a cover for insecurity. So, rather than tell the truth, which is that they don't believe they deserve to have the life they want, they don't believe that they are good enough to get the life they want. They don't believe that they have enough value, they call that being humble.

But I don't think that's what humility is. I think humility is the opposite of hierarchy. So, I think humility is about understanding that as a human to human to human, we are all equal. I am not more worthy than any other human alive. I do not have more intrinsic value or intrinsic worth than any human alive. And nothing that can be added to my life externally, no amount of accomplishments, no amount of money I make, no matter what kinds of relationships I have, none of that can make me better or more worthy or more valuable than another person.

So, to me, that's what humility is about. It is sort of the opposite of a quote unquote big head, but to me, it has nothing to do with confidence. The opposite of confidence is insecurity. The opposite of humility is hierarchy.

Some people will say the opposite of humility is pride. But I don't think that's true. Because I think, if you look, men are encouraged to be proud of themselves all the time. And when I talk about teaching women to be proud of themselves, I mean to be proud of their ability to do hard things and create results they didn't think they could and grow and evolve and blow their own mind. Not to be proud that they possess this object and that makes them better than other people.

And that kind of pride might be the opposite of humility. But I don't think that pride is the right word. I think it's hierarchy. I think humility is the opposite of hierarchy. Humility means understanding that we're all just

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humans and none of us is more worthy or deserving or valuable than anyone else. We're all equally worthy and deserving, infinitely so.

So, I think that is humility. And the other thing that comes to mind, I think it's related in a way, which is like I always want to remain humble about everything out there that I don't know. So, it's kind of similar.

It's like not being – maybe arrogant is the right word. But it's more just like I want to always be transparent and honest and real about the fact that I don't know everything in the world. How could I? More will always be revealed. More will always be happening.

I can control certain things in my life and about me and how I show up and react. I can't control the world. So, again, it's sort of like if hierarchy is the opposite of humility, I think maybe another opposite of humility is a false sense of omnipotence, like believing you know everything, believing you can control everything, believing you can control other people and the weather and what happens in the stock market and all these things outside of you, believing you are the teacher and not the student.

I always want to be the teacher and the student. There's always more I can learn. My own practice is always deepening. I'm never at the end of that road.

So, it's interesting actually, it kind of just goes back to hierarchy. I'm sort of thinking this through as I answer this question. There's hierarchy of value, thinking you're more valuable than someone else. And there's hierarchy of knowledge in the sense of I do think I know more about certain topics than some other people might because I've studied them. But I don't ever believe I know everything about a topic.

I don't think I've reached the pinnacle of knowledge ever, that I know everything, that there's nothing left to learn, that I have it all figured out. So, it's almost like a hierarchy of knowledge. That's the opposite to me.

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Humility is saying, “Here’s what I know to the best of my ability.” It’s like recognizing my own limited vantage point, my own limited human mind. Like, my mission is to stretch my own limited human mind as far as I can, but knowing that I’m never going to reach the limit. No other human alive ever is either. Nobody ever will, probably.

So, I think in those contexts, humility is a useful concept because it’s really about equality and open-mindedness. It is not a useful concept when it’s a cover for insecurity, lack of belief in yourself, lack of believing you need to be more deserving or more worthy or something else. Anytime that humility has to do with thinking well of yourself, like having basic self-love and respect, I don’t think it’s helpful. And I do think it’s a quality that’s associated with women, like women are supposed to be humble. And we don’t really hear that as much about men. Like successful men are not criticized about touting their own success. But successful women are often criticized for that.

Next question, “I struggle immensely with comparing myself to a friend of mine. I find thoughts about her entering my mind so often, often presenting as she would never do this or act this way in situations where I’ve reacted negatively. I also have thoughts about whether she would be impressed or even hopeful that’s he might feel jealous or inadequate because of what I’ve done, rather than me feeling this way so often.

I’m so confused by what seems to be two very contradictory lines of thinking. One of which is so frequently coming to mind and plaguing my thoughts. Even worse, I’m starting to have similar lines of thinking about our daughters, who are very similar in age. I realize these thoughts are extremely damaging to myself and our relationship, even though she’s mostly unaware of them, and that they will be extremely damaging to my daughter. I’m just at a loss as to where to begin with working on these issues though. I’d be grateful for any suggestions on how to approach this.”

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Okay, so number one, I don't recommend thinking this is extremely damaging. Because that just makes it all seem very high-stakes and it's going to be very stressful. So, you're now telling yourself that your thoughts are super dangerous and that you're judging them. That's not helpful. They're just thoughts. They're not the end of the world. So, that's number one.

Number two, this has nothing to do with your friend. And if you keep asking yourself why you're like this with your friend, you're never going to get a good answer.

She is just a puppet. She's like a ventriloquist dummy in your brain for your thoughts about you. It has nothing to do with her. If she didn't exist, you would be having these thoughts about another friend. She has nothing to do with anything. These are all just your own thoughts about you.

So, what you are really doing is you've made you're you, and then in your brain, she's the you you think you should be. And it's all about your thoughts about the you that you are versus the you that you think you should be. She has nothing to do with any of it. None of this is about who she actually is, what she's actually like, anything like that.

So, it's really important to understand that she is irrelevant. It has nothing to do with her. And that all your thoughts about her are not accurate probably and have nothing to do with her. This is just about your thoughts about you, how you are, and your thoughts about how you think you should be.

When you take her out of it and you just see it like that, it's just you have thoughts about what you're like now and you have thoughts about what you think you should be. That's all you're dealing with, then you can figure out how to work on it.

Then you just need to work on noticing your judgment of yourself, noticing all of your shoulds about how you think you should be and all your

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unrealistic expectations of yourself, and then working on your thought process to think thoughts that are a little bit more accepting of you being a normal imperfect human like the rest of us.

She's not perfect. She's not any of these things. She is just a faceless dummy that you are putting your shoulds for yourself on. That's the mask you've put on her. That's what it's really about. And with the daughters, it's the same thing. You're just identifying as your daughter like you and her daughter as the way you think your daughter or you should be.

So, you just need to make sure that you don't get confused by this lie your brain's telling you has anything to do with her. These are all, it's just thoughts about you and your thoughts about how you think you should be. Any thought you have about her is a thought about how you think you should be. That's how you have to think about it.

Okay Chickens, pop quiz. Have you signed up for the Deprogramming the Patriarchy from Your Brain Bootcamp yet? Because if you haven't, what are you waiting for? Do you have patriarchy on your brain? Yes, you do. Do you want to get the patriarchy out of your brain? Yes, you do.

I promise, both those things are true. Everything I have accomplished in my life that I am proud of or feel good about, every good relationship I have, every achievement in my business, every milestone in my relationship with myself, those have all come from getting the patriarchy the fuck out of my brain.

It's a lifetime project, but I have made a lot of progress and I really want to teach you all how to do that in a more structured, focused way where we can be together coaching and teaching and learning for an intense immersion period. That is one of the ways that the brain learns best, is to spend time in a kind of short, concentrated environment.

And so, that is why I am doing this five-day Deprogramming the Patriarchy from Your Brain Bootcamp and it is all going down July 19th to 23rd. It's

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going to be an hour a day of live teaching and coaching. All you need is a free Zoom account. It is going to be amazing.

So, if you want to join us – and again, I really can't imagine why you wouldn't, although if you are in The Clutch, you are going to get access to everything. We will put all of the replays in The Clutch Membership, so don't worry, you do not need to sign up separately. But if you are not in The Clutch and you want a taste of what this work can do, this is the perfect opportunity.

So, you can text your email to +1-347-997-1784 and enter the codeword 5 day challenge, written with spaces like you were writing a correct grammatical sentence, 5 day challenge. Or you can visit unfuckyourbrain.com/5daychallenge, all one word.

Come, sign up, let's get the patriarchy out of your brain. Let's teach you how to think on purpose, how to act in alignment with the person you want to be. These are incredibly crucial life skills that, I don't know about you, but I have not learned anywhere else. I did not learn them until I found coaching and until I worked with a coach in a concentrated, focused way.

I love this podcast. This podcast is my free offering of all of this work to the world, but we all know that when you set aside time and you really decide to commit to learning something and you focus on it for a shorter intense period, you can really make amazing leaps and bounds in your work on it. So, come do that.

Come join the Deprogramming the Patriarchy from Your Brain Bootcamp. It's going to be amazing. It's the only kind of bootcamp I ever want to do. I'm not doing those 7AM exercise bootcamps, but I am doing this. So, come check it out, unfuckyourbrain.com/5daychallenge, or text your email to +1-347-997-1784 and enter the codeword 5 day challenge. I'll see you there.