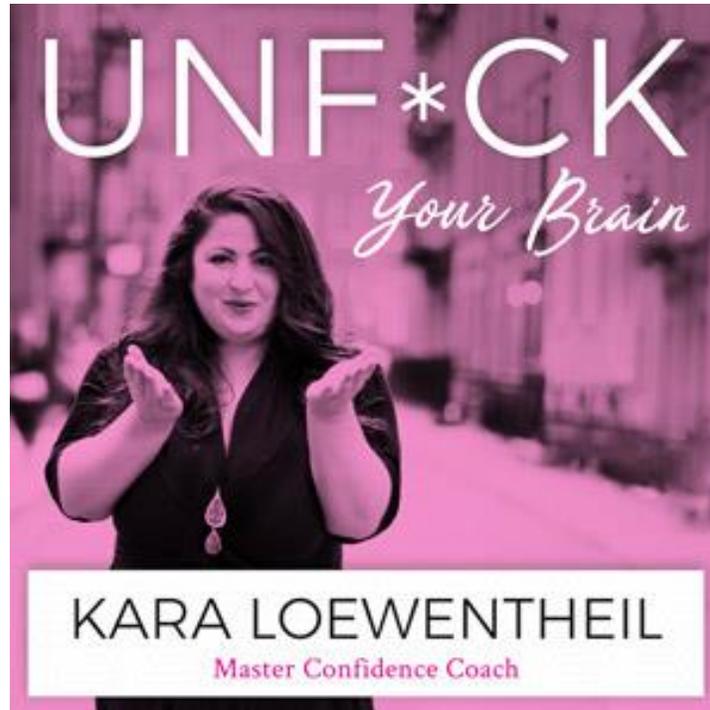


UFYB 195: Women & Authority



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Welcome to *Unf*ck Your Brain*, the only podcast that teaches you how to use psychology, feminism, and coaching, to rewire your brain and get what you want in life. And now here's your host, Harvard law school grad, feminist rockstar, and master coach, Kara Loewentheil.

Hello my chickens. How are you? This week has been amazing. I have been teaching and coaching my little face off in the Deprogram Patriarchy from Your Brain Bootcamp. I know so many of you attended that.

It has been beyond my wildest expectations of how much powerful teaching and coaching and learning was going to happen. You guys asked such great questions, we did so much good coaching, and sort of watching all of you really learn how to get the patriarchy out of your brain in real time has just been so incredible.

So if you missed it this time, I get it. I understand. I don't blame you for feeling like you missed out. But I do think we will do this again because it was such an amazing experience and I should say also, if you joined The Clutch, you will get the replays from this for free.

So if you are bummed out that you missed it and you want to be able to watch all of the teaching and coaching we did, you totally still can. Won't be in real time but if you join The Clutch, you'll get access to replays and that's just unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch.

So today I am talking to several of my Advanced Certification students all about one of the big themes actually that has been coming up in the Bootcamp, which is the authority or lack of authority that women feel in their lives.

And I think one of the things that has become so obvious as I have been teaching and coaching around patriarchal socialization all this week is who we're shown has authority, who we are shown is empowered to make

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

decisions, who we are shown can trust their own decisions or instincts or thought processes.

Women are socialized to not trust themselves and to not see themselves as authoritative. And so I think that we more frequently want validation from someone outside of ourselves or we want someone else to tell us our idea is good. We want someone else to agree with us about what we're going to do or if it's the right path or how to handle something.

And there's nothing wrong with bouncing your ideas off other people. Obviously I have colleagues, I love doing that, but I can feel a very big difference between when my thought process is like, this is an idea, I'm curious if anyone has any additional thoughts that would make it even better, versus my thought is I don't know what to do, my thought is I don't know what the right decision is, my thought is I might make the wrong decision and so I want other people to tell me if I'm making the right decision so that I can lean on their authority somehow instead of my own.

And I think that is one of the things that undermines women so much in every area of their lives. We just spend so much energy second guessing ourselves or avoiding making decisions or taking leadership entirely because we're afraid of what we'll think and feel.

So today I'm talking to three of the recent graduates of my Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching, all of whom have now been certified. Congratulations to all of them. All about authority, how authority shows up in the different populations they work with, which are really a big range in this particular podcast with this particular coaches. And sort of what's going on with women's brains and authority and why it's so important for women to learn how to claim their own authority.

If you are a coach and you're interested in the Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching, we are going to open up again for registration later this fall. It is application only and we always get more applications than we can

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

take but I do do it on a rolling basis, so finding out right when it opens will give you a better shot at getting into the program.

So if you want to join the waitlist, we will let the waitlist know. The waitlist gets first dibs on the application process when we open again. So go to unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc. Those are just the initials.

[Unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc](http://unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc) or text your email address to +13479971784 and use the codeword ACFC. All one word, just the initials. So text your email to +13479971784 and use the codeword ACFC and then you will be the first to know when we open applications again later this fall.

Alright, without further ado, let's take it away with this conversation about authority.

—

Kara: Alright, today my chickens, we have a very special treat. I say that every time, it's true every time. Today we have some of my favorite people, my Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching students who are all certified coaches, some of them master certified, and we're going to be talking today about authority and how women and other marginalized people tend to relate to authority and have difficulty showing up with authority.

And I think sometimes when I think about if I had to summarize what is all of my work in one sentence, or what is the one through line that I see so much of what women and people of any gender identification who live in a marginalized identity or more than one struggle with is both their relationship to authority outside of them and claiming their own authority.

Women especially are socialized to think that they don't know what's best for them, they're not the expert, they need other people to agree with them and validate them and so it leads to all of this spinning we do, constantly seeking outside validation.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

So that's what we're going to talk about. I'm going to have everybody introduce themselves first and then I'm just excited to dive into all the brilliance they have to share about this. So why don't I call on people to introduce themselves to make this smooth. Amy, you want to start us off?

Amy: Yeah, I'm Amy Logan. I'm an ex-Mormon life coach, people who have left what is now referred to as the Latter-Day Saints, which are Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints. And I coach women and men, mostly women though, and so this topic is hugely important to me and us learning how to be our own authority.

Kara: Yeah, that totally makes sense. You leave one very structured authority system.

Amy: Yes, definitely.

Kara: Elona, what about you?

Elona: Yeah, my name is Elona Tuomi, I coach women in tech and specifically women who are feeling burned out and overwhelmed. I trained as a life coach but the whole reason I really did it is because I went through Unfuck Your Brain and it was kind of the missing link that I was looking for. And so I trained to be able to share that with other women and kind of get them out of burnout and find their authority so they can make the change that they're there to make in the world essentially.

Kara: Yeah, so good. And for those who were like, what is Unfuck Your Brain, it's not the podcast. Elona means I used to run a small group program called Unfuck Your Brain. I think that is such a - it's like everybody else has to agree it's a good idea or even suggest what they should do to them before they're allowed to do it. Because we don't feel like we have the authority to make our own decisions. What about you Paige?

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Paige: Hi, I'm Paige Dempsey, I'm a coach who is passionate about working with women in relationships, so either both dating or family relationships. Those are areas that I've done a lot of work on myself, so how we show up and make decisions and let people in and sometimes let people go. So that's where I'm interested in coaching mostly.

Kara: Love it. So what if we just start by - I'd love to hear from each of you, we touched on a few little bits but how this question of authority shows up in your work, where do you see women especially kind of having most trouble with authority, and then how do you see the kind of work the way we do it, helping them resolve that. So why don't we go in the order we introduced ourselves. Amy, you want to start?

Amy: Yeah, I'm happy to start. This being that I'm in the world of kind of post-religion. Most of my clients leave Mormonism and coincidentally, a lot of them just leave religion in general. So seeing - I don't think you see it straight away, but seeing how religion is a patriarchal structure unless there are some religions I am not aware of that maybe don't have the patriarchal structure built...

Kara: Apparently Mormonism at least.

Amy: And that's my - yeah, that's what I know very well. So that's why this is just so important to me. I see women not trusting themselves and that's the correlation I see between authority and trusting ourselves because we think and we've been taught that there's someone else who knows more than you. And that trickles down to not having the confidence or being able to trust yourself.

When I was able to give myself the permission to trust myself is when everything started to change for me. And I see those as two very connected pieces of this puzzle.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Kara: So it's like we think if we don't trust ourselves then we need someone else to be the arbiter of what we should be doing or what is right or what is good. How did you come to trust yourself? How did you make that transition?

Amy: Gosh, it's a good question because it was a long time period. Because I remember sitting in church, we call it sacrament meeting, kind of where we meet in wards, which is just groupings of people in our neighborhood. And I would sit in there as I was deconstructing my faith and I would look around the people that I'd met with, my congregation, and I'm like, "But they're so much smarter than me." That was my first thought.

So even though I was educated, I graduated from school, but I felt like, well, they collectively, of course all of them, and not that this has to be a smart or educated question, but for me that's what I remember thinking first. Well, other people know better.

So to make the leap from other people know better to I'm going to make the decision that's best for me took a while to get there, to where I felt like my confidence was up or I was going to trust what my gut was telling me versus what someone else was preaching from the pulpit of what I'm supposed to think and believe.

Kara: So interesting because at the living room retreat I did recently, one of the students was actually a coach from my certification who also has left the Mormon church and what I ended up coaching her on was authority but she was having this not wanting to claim any authority because having seen how authority worked in the church and feeling - her thoughts being that authority was something that was used to harm people or was used to oppress people, so she didn't want any of it. But then she couldn't claim authority over her own life or her own expertise because she didn't want anything to do with authority in general.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Amy: Oh, that's so interesting. I can see how that would be connected because we even have a term in the church called church authority where we kind of refer and it's a very patriarchal structure. I don't know if you've ever seen the flow chart of the Mormon structure there but it's all men. There's a few women down at the bottom but to claim it, you really have to practice that trusting yourself muscle for sure. That's how I had to do it.

I'm like, well, I'm going to trust myself to read this book that the church doesn't think I should read. I'm going to trust myself then to do this. And it wasn't all at once. It was kind of like, okay, I'm gaining more knowledge, I'm trying to figure this out. So it just - my confidence increased the more and more I kept trusting that inner knowing.

Kara: So interesting. What about you Elona?

Elona: Yeah, I think when people arrive in burnout, it's kind of a mix of three things. There's this mental, physical exhaustion, there can be this heightened feeling of cynicism, and there's also this feeling of inefficacy about your work. So that you're not really doing your work well, you're not adequate.

And I see at least the first and the third are often really dominant in women who are in that state of burnout. And if you're not feeling inadequacy, if you're not feeling your own worth, I think Tara Brach talks about this as being in the trance of unworthiness where you're disconnected from your innate worth.

Then what happens is that you're looking externally. You're just trying to find that validation. So it becomes very important what people say to you or what kind of feedback do you get, but then again, that's also being filtered through this lens, it's inaccurate. Where you're discarding your accomplishments, you're discarding the evidence of your own value, your own innate value.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

And so there's kind of looking for this authority external to yourself. And the thing about it is if people look at them externally, they'll think they're really successful, they have the title, they have the level, they have the responsibilities, and then internally, they're disconnected from that feeling themselves. So a lot of what we are kind of looking at early on is just recapturing the reality of your value and your authority.

Kara: And do you feel like women in tech - I guess I sort of think of people in tech as being like, I guess not anti-authority but there's just so much talk about disrupting this industry, that there's sort of this stereotype is that people are like, I'm going to drop out of college and figure it out my way. There's a little bit of an anti-traditional authority.

Elona: Yeah, there is, but it's like the myth of the genius developer is pretty much always a male developer. And the history of women in tech, it's being rediscovered. The first programmers were women. And that was thought to be kind of an okay deal too back in the 60s and 70s because it was thought to be a clerical job, writing code.

And that kind of changed around in the 1980s where it became this - the genius developer was probably a white male developer. And so I even have women at some points, they will voice the thought, "Well, maybe I'm only this level because I'm the diversity promotion, or I'm the diversity hire," based on gender. Not based on ability.

And so because it is an underrepresented group, there are groups that are far more underrepresented, but it is an underrepresented group. And so it's easy to maybe kind of reinforce that idea that you don't belong because you don't see yourself reflected based on population demographics.

Kara: Yeah, so interesting. What about you Paige? How do you see this show up in your work?

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Paige: I think that interpersonal relationships for women, this shows up everywhere all the time constantly. So as we talk about in our feminist coaching certification, women are defined by our relationships, by our friendships, by our partnerships, by our family relationships.

I would add to a lot of what Amy said, it comes down to self-trust and self-knowing and a little bit by bit. But women call each other and say, hey, so-and-so didn't text me back, or I swiped on somebody on a dating app, or we dated for three weeks, now he's not writing me back.

And it's like, we're just trained to sort of look outside ourselves for that validation and that support and explanation. There's got to be an explanation, if it's not him it's got to be me, and it's usually on me, so I just want to help change that because there are so many other things that are in play.

I think we see that a lot in families too. There's a lot of the mother daughter - what's the word? The mother daughter thing that it should be a way and if it's not the way that we see it portrayed in the media then something's wrong. And in both cases, one of those quotes that I found a long time ago that just really resonated with me, you talk about Copenhagen and croissants, but I think it was Elizabeth Gilbert or somebody said you got to quit going to the hardware store for milk.

It's like, yes, they don't have that there. So a lot of it I think has to do with the should, he should this, or she should that, or my mom should be this way, my brother should be that way, and they're never that way. And so...

Kara: How does that relate to authority in your mind?

Paige: I think it's authority about having a life that you are in charge of and having a life that you're okay with things - sort of accepting things the way that they are and then deciding on purpose how you want to show up and how you want to be in that place.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Kara: As you're talking about that, I feel like part of the problem is we try to be the authority over things that aren't ours. I'm the authority on how soon people should text me back, and I'm the authority on how this person should show up in this relationship.

We try to control the things that aren't ours to control and we want to be the authority about how you're supposed to conduct yourself as my mom, as my person I'm dating, as my friend, as my boss, whatever. But then when it comes to us and our own decisions and we're like, oh no, I need somebody else to tell me this.

Paige: Totally. It's the great dichotomy. It goes back to the manual and we farm out a lot of authority when it's like, we know inside ourselves - I think actually, that's another problem. I think a lot of women don't know what they want. We're so conditioned to take what's given to us or be okay with mediocrity, so there are so many layers to it that it's okay to want what you want.

It's okay to want to be in a different religion or a different job or a different kind of relationship. So I think the authority from my angle is just really having authority over your choices. I've made some of those decisions in my own relationships where it's okay to change your mind. It's okay to have a relationship that's not what they show in the movies or the storybooks. That can be okay too.

Kara: Yeah, that's interesting. I generally think my take on it is usually that women do know what they want but they don't think they can have it, and so they tell themselves that they're confused. And they tell themselves that they don't know what they want.

But it's like, often if you dig down deep enough - I had this once with a 22-year-old who was like, I don't know what I want to do for work. That was her story was she didn't know what she wanted to do. And when we asked

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

questions, it was actually, she had a really specific desire to be a marine biologist who worked with octopuses or something.

But she just had all this stuff on top of it about why she couldn't do that and that wasn't an option for her. So it's basically like women are like, I know what I want to do but I'm not allowed to do that, I can't have that, I'm not good enough for that. So if I can't have the thing I really want, then I don't know what I want, which yeah, okay, you can't have the thing you want then what you want then.

So I'm curious since you mentioned ACFC, to hear from all of you, how did going through the program or studying what we studied change your thought process about women and authority or sort of how did it impact this element of your work or in your personal life. How do you feel if at all that it kind of impacted your own sense of authority? Just jump on in, whoever wants it. They're all looking at me like who's supposed to talk now.

Amy: This is Amy here. I think that it just helped me give a greater perspective and to see how our brains have been conditioned all along without even really noticing. And how we just kind of soak up everything around us. Our social structure, religious structure, our friend structure.

And we're just in it and we don't even see. And so this is just such a great - ACFC was such a great way to see how everything's interconnected. The intersectionality of it all, I absolutely love it. I wanted to say something to Paige's point about trusting and seeing how we think we're trusting ourselves but then we have to ask like, five, six people.

We want their validation and then we're like, well now I'm still not sure. So I think it's kind of practicing no, just making one of these decisions by yourself without seeking all the guidance and let that...

Kara: It's such a good point because it never helps. If you haven't given yourself the authority to decide, you can ask five people and they'll all say

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

you should do that. And then you go to the sixth one, you're like, so here's the pluses and here's the minuses and I don't know which one I should do.

It isn't - that classic quote which is you can't get enough of what you don't need, can't get enough of what you're not hungry for. People use that in emotional eating stuff but also just in life. You can't get enough of what you don't need. And you can't get enough external validation of your choices if you aren't giving yourself the authority to decide because you're just like, well okay, eight of them thought this but I'm still not sure.

Amy: I find it muckies the water and then we just spin in confusion more because we're like, well, now we have more thoughts to mull over instead of trusting that piece of you that usually knows. We usually know, but we're afraid of actually taking the steps that will...

Kara: I find I do that most often when I know what I want to do but I don't think that it's a good enough reason. It's like I want someone else to validate my reason and then I'll ask and everybody will say to do the other thing and then I keep asking other people because I'm waiting for someone to say to do the thing that I wanted to do in the first place.

So we're like, you can sort of feel when I think you're doing that, when you're not trusting your own authority, you're like, well, if so-and-so, if I ask eight people and one of them agrees with me, then I can do it. But then when you don't get the answer you want, you keep shopping it around. You're like, let me try over here, let me try framing it a different way to see if I can get them to agree with me about what I should do. And then you end up just doing the thing you wanted to do in the first place.

Amy: Yeah, just prolongs the struggle.

Kara: Yeah.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Paige: Well, I just want to say that brings up a good point is I think it keeps women especially in inaction because we're waiting for that validation from outside sources. So you might have a few friends that you know are going to agree with you and then you might have some that you know are not, but the authority comes from making a decision regardless of what everybody else is going to think, regardless of what their feedback might be, regardless - I mean, Kara, you've talked about this a lot.

Mom is going to be mom. Susie is going to be Susie. Everybody's going to have an opinion. So if we wait for the time that 100% of people agree with our choices, we're just going to be waiting a really long time.

Kara: Yeah. I think women don't want to claim authority sometimes because they're afraid of being wrong. We're just afraid that we made the wrong decision, whatever that means, like we're going to get some certified letter that's like, that was wrong, you did it wrong.

And then we're going to say all these horrible things to ourselves, right? And so then we get paralyzed. It's like that client I was coaching at the living room retreat. It's like, well, I don't want authority. Hers was I don't want it because it's harmful, but it's this similar I don't want the authority because then that means that I'm in charge, and that's a whole new arena of ways for me to be shitty to myself.

Whereas if I pretend that I'm not in charge, then at least I don't have to blame myself. I'm going to trade the possibility of blame for the discomfort of spinning in confusion and feeling disempowered. Because we think those are our only two options.

Elona: Yeah. It's like the ownership of all the decisions. I think what you all are describing too to me sounds like the human version of the pro-con list. You make the pro-con list and then you don't like the pros say this, and you don't like it, and I mean, the heuristic I've always decided on is if I want it and I'm afraid of it, I'll just go do it because just signing up for a

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

certification, just signing up for coaching initially, it just makes the decision easy.

But I think when women get to the authority point too, what seems to arrive is the clarity around making those decisions. I think I had a client say she just felt so liberated, tears of joy because of the opportunities that were now open to her. Because she had removed the obstructions for herself and she knew what she wanted. But I mean, going back to your question about the certification, I would say do you remember week two when we were all kind of shellshocked?

Kara: Yeah, that was surprising. I was like, what? This is what did it? You never know.

Elona: Yeah. And it was like, it was week two or it was week three I think and it was seeing all those beliefs written out on paper and you kind of knew they were there but then all of a sudden they were in your face. But what I loved about it was I'm always looking for the system behind things and when I think about ARCA, I love ARCA because you gave us a system, so awareness, resistance, curiosity, authority.

Kara: We should pause and just explain what ARCA is since people don't necessarily know what that is listening to this. It's an advanced tool I teach that has to do with your relationship to the model, to how you coach yourself. So I teach it in the advanced certification, I teach it at Clutch College sometimes.

Elona: Yeah. So just knowing that okay, I'm in the awareness stage, I'm in the resistance stage, and just being able to characterize what resistance looks like, yeah, I know these things, I'm aware they're thoughts, but I really believe they're true, or now I'm going to use them to judge myself, like I'm even more worthless because I have these thoughts or something.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Just knowing where you are and that your next step through is curiosity. And then after that there's that insight that occurs where you just know, your belief system, it kind of turns upside down.

Kara: This is so important because people get so stuck in their self-coaching because they won't take authority for it. So I mean, I see this, we just did this Clutch Gold event yesterday. So The Clutch gold members are members who have been in The Clutch for a year or more and we did a free full day coaching event with me and the Clutch coaches.

And it was so interesting. People had so much drama around - numbers wise of course I was not going to be able to coach every single person individually, which they knew going in. But there was all of this drama around not getting called on for coaching because so many of them had just decided to give me the authority over their coaching and to tell themselves that they were not going to be able to solve their problem unless they got coached directly by me.

They couldn't solve it themselves, none of the other coaches could help them solve it, none of the other chickens could help them solve it, even though literally those people are probably asking the same questions that I would ask, possibly better ones.

But I think I see this in self-coaching and in coaching so much is we want to give our authority over to the coach and then we don't want to take authority for solving our own problem and we want to believe that we are stuck. And then it allows us to kind of feel like we're doing something about a problem but actually not be doing anything about it and just be like, waiting, waiting, waiting until somebody with the authority is going to come and magically solve the problem for us.

Elona: Yeah. And then as you know, we're going to argue with you anyway.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Kara: Like, are you watching me coach people? People, it's not like I open my mouth and make a pronouncement and then they're like, oh my God, that changed it. I'm like, maybe you shouldn't be so mean to yourself and they're like, no, I'm definitely going to keep being mean to myself. That's what I should do.

It's so crazy but there is that human and especially female woman socialized tendency to somebody else - I can't solve my own problems. I mean, think about all the tropes of men rescuing women. That's such a trope in our society is the damsel in distress and then somebody else comes to rescue them, usually a man.

And so I think we often just tell ourselves that we can't solve our own problems. I get questions often where people are like, it's just - this is what I think, am I doing my own self-coaching right? And I'm like, well, are you getting the result you want? And they're like, yeah. And I'm like, okay, that's all you need. You don't need my blessing. I don't need to make the sign of the cross over it and sprinkle some holy water for it to be legitimate self-coaching.

But that's how deeply women are - we're socialized to distrust ourselves so deeply that even if what we're doing is producing the result that we want, seems like everything's proceeding the way we want it to, we're still like I might be doing this wrong, I got to get the approval, the stamp of approval, the blessing, the justification, the validation.

Elona: Yeah, the legitimacy.

Kara: Yeah. Women don't think that we have the legitimacy to decide.

Amy: Can I add on to this? Being in ACFC and now we're talking about ARCA, we'll just throw in all the letters here.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Kara: Use all the acronyms. Being in the advanced certification, talking about this tool, yes.

Amy: I think that the awareness, that is what this whole course for me was. I felt like every week I was so in the middle of realizing my brain is just consuming volumes of information because I learned so much. And so that awareness piece is so important because I could have taken it and judged the hell out of myself for not knowing all this.

I just did add that part of just curiosity. Wow, okay. Now that I can see this, all these things I didn't know, which I'd already done once when I had my faith - been through something similar. I'm like, oh, okay, this is familiar to me because I'm having to reach and access those places in my brain that were like, wait, what? How is this connected? So that's what I love so much about the course in general, generally speaking.

Kara: That's interesting. Do we think that authority and curiosity are related? I mean, I guess when we talk about self-coaching they are. You can't get authority over something unless you're curious about it. If you don't get to know it then you can't have authority about it.

Amy: I think just asking yourself lots of questions. That's what my brain was doing during this. So I had to keep in that space of asking more questions, which is how I create my own authority. I get curious about whatever the subject matter is.

Kara: So how do we solve this? How can women - if people are listening to this and they're like, oh yeah, that tracks, I don't think that I have authority and I want validation for my decisions and I want everyone to tell me it was a good idea, I mean, I think about how hilarious that is too.

When I was starting my coaching business, I wanted my parents to validate that choice, which was like, why would they validate that choice? They just put me through law school. I'd gone to law school. Actually, my father's an

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

entrepreneur and has his own business, but they were the ones who raised me to follow this traditional path for various reasons, many of which were good reasons. It's like wanting other Mormons to validate your choice to leave the church kind of. Not that extreme, but like...

Amy: Which doesn't work, by the way.

Kara: It's like I wanted them to do the work for me of believing in me and this dream, which is a crazy thing to ask of people when you're like, hi, I've never had a business and I found this woman on the internet and I'm going to go pay to get trained by her at a Holiday Inn in the middle of nowhere California, and then I'm going to quit my job running a think tank and become a life coach. The idea that I would be - I really need other people to think this is a great idea...

Amy: What was it for you? How did you find your own authority in that space when lots of people had differing opinions of what you should do?

Kara: It was a process. I think that's another thing. No one listening to this should think like, I feel like I've been teaching about this a lot, which is like, no emotional state is an island that we get to arrive to. And then we're just like, we get to live there.

So it wasn't like I was like, oh, I did all this work and now I believe I have authority over every area of my life and now everything is perfect. It was just like, the proportion of barfyness to desire just had to go by 1%, 1%, 1% to get to the point where I was like, oh God, I still want to die but I'm going to say this thing.

Which I did at a party because I thought maybe couldn't forget as much if it was in a public place. So it was not like I arrived feeling amazing about it. But anyway, I feel like the question I wanted to ask all of you is so if somebody is listening to this and they're like, oh wow, I want people to validate my decisions and I don't want to take authority over my own life

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

and I don't think I can have authority and I think other people know better than me what I should do, and there is a right and wrong answer, I think that's one of the big misconceptions.

People think if you're an authority, you have to know the right thing to do, as if there is a right thing to do. As opposed to that's not what it means. What can they start doing in their self-coaching or their own thought work to start to shift that? What do you guys recommend to your clients as a kind of first step to working on this?

Paige: I'll jump in really fast because it kind of piggybacks on what we learned from the feminist coaching certification. The one thing I've learned a lot from you Kara, that you're brilliant at is just going deeper and deeper and deeper. And so we saw that in the ACFC and you did that yesterday in the gold coaching extravaganza.

But I picture it like an onion, obviously layers, but almost like those Russian nesting dolls. You take the big one off and you're like, oh, it's this, and then you take the next one off, you're like, oh, it's this. A girl yesterday, the lady that was talking about her boyfriend doesn't do the dishes and it really wasn't about the dishes. It's about the relationship with her partner.

And so I think I see a lot in The Clutch or in the Facebook group about here's my model, and then here's my intentional model, and it's like, wow, really slowing down. And from another perspective a lot of times in work, they take about the five why's.

Like why didn't we sell enough widgets in our company? And then you're like, well, and you keep asking why four, five, or six times to get to the root cause. So that would be my beginner to expert advice because that just seems to be where all the clarity is and just sit in that space, or ask for outside coaching or ask for peer coaching.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Because I know for myself, a lot of times I'll sit down and do my self-coaching. It's like I know, but then I need somebody else to kind of crack it open a little. What about that? That thing? And I'm like oh. So that would be my suggestion.

Kara: Yeah, I think that speaks to this idea that if you aren't willing to be curious, you can't get authority over something. If you aren't willing to really understand it and be with it, it's almost like we think authority is about action a lot of the time kind of but it's actually about - yes, it's about making decisions but it's also about being willing to sit with something until you have emotional authority over your own experience and aren't believing that something else is causing your feelings.

Paige: 100% that.

Kara: Yeah. What do you guys think, Amy and Elona?

Elona: Well, I mean I think curiosity, you got to get out of judgment. And a lot of what will root you in resistance is the criticality of yourself and the judgment of yourself. Initially, it's the judgment, it's those thoughts that are in your thought downloads about how you should be doing this or you should be doing that. All that kind of crap that's producing the feelings of shame or whatever it is that you're starting to get awareness of.

But then you start - you do start judging yourself for having that. And if you can kind of get underneath it and just see that system for what it is, it's like okay, I had these shitty thoughts about myself and then now I have these shitty meta thoughts about myself. And what if none of that has to be true? What's the evidence?

I think that the evidence finding to move out of that confirmation bias and into what if something else was true, just playing around with it, just having that willingness to just go there a little is the thing that really starts punching

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

little pinholes in those beliefs. And then they start getting more porous and you're like, wait what, I thought this was a rock wall.

And you start to see that it's just this porous thing you started to punch through and that opens up more possibilities. And then also going through that cycle, like you say, no emotion is an island. But as you go through the process of being able to get to one island, you're skills building to know that you can do this again.

And that's where having a coach, having The Clutch, having other people, even watching coaching or getting coached by you or The Clutch coaches, it can just give you that little bit of did you see this over here? The thing Paige is saying, you can completely miss in your self-coaching. That can just kind of crack it open and give you a whole different avenue of exploration that you wouldn't have had if you're just trying to sit in isolation and do it by yourself.

So I think that's a really powerful way. But this is a skill. So you kind of have to get comfortable with, I don't know if we want to call it failing at it, but growing like you grow any skill.

Kara: There's no magic like, oh, now I feel authoritative over everything. Now I feel confident in my authority. You have to practice it and not die and practice it and not die to build it up.

Elona: You see more and more stuff that's just bullshit so it's easier to see more later.

Paige: I'm just going to add, Kara you talked about this too, the trap door scenario. So a lot of times when I see this with my clients and in myself and in people everywhere, coaching or like, it has to be A or it has to be B, and it's like, well, it could be C, D, E, X. So when people are trying to self-coach, you could just try to get creative and like, well, let's think of another reason this can be what it is.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

And just try to be creative because I see so many times people think such dichotomous thinking. So again, Elona's you're up against a rock wall, you just want to crack it open a little bit and think of other possible ideas and thoughts and explanations.

Kara: We associate authority with kind of force or power or this is clear or this is right or this is wrong, versus what if authority means kind of having that self-possession to consider multiple options, then make a decision, or to be more open and flexible as opposed to - it's like the traditional model of authority has been male in our culture and has often been white Christian men. And they have exercised their authority in one particular way that doesn't mean it's the only way to have authority or exercise authority. What do you think, Amy? Closing thoughts on that?

Amy: Yeah, what keeps coming to my mind is just thinking of my evolution as a human and my inability over the years to make decisions. And one of your teachings that really helped me and I see this connected, being connected with my own authority is just practice making decisions. Because then there's just another decision to make.

We're so hesitant to make decisions because we're going to do it wrong or there's an A and a B, there's a certain way we're supposed to be doing it, especially if there was some religious conditioning. It's usually a black and white, so that contributes to that.

So that trusting yourself, going back to that, that you are your own authority is okay, if it ends up being not the best decision, we just do another one. We make another decision. That's the worst thing that's going to happen is there'll be another decision to make.

Kara: Yeah. I mean, what's coming to me and what wraps it all up is like, let's see if I can say this the way I'm thinking about it. The authority you need is actually the authority over your relationship with yourself. Because your relationship with any external authority reflects that.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

If you are rebellious against external authority, you're rebellious against your own authority. And the thing that we are most afraid of with authority usually is that we don't want to claim it because we think we'll do it wrong and make a mistake. But why are we afraid of that? Just because we're going to beat ourselves up and say mean shit to ourselves, right?

So we don't have authority, those of us when we don't have authority over the way we talk to ourselves or treat ourselves, then we don't want to and can't take authority over anything else. So it's like your relationship with yourself has to be the first place that you claim that authority.

I'm going to decide what I think about me. I'm not going to just think whatever I was told to think about me. I'm going to decide how I talk to me. I'm not going to necessarily talk to me the way my parents talked to me or the priest talked to me or whoever, the teacher talked to me, or the church tells me to talk to me.

I'm going to decide what I think about myself, I'm going to decide my relationship with myself. Then when you claim that authority, I think then you feel empowered to and safe exercising authority or not exercising authority in other areas.

And you see ways of doing it that make more sense for you that aren't necessarily that white patriarchal Christian male model of authority, which is like, I'm on top and you're below and I know everything and you know nothing and I will decide what happens and you need to just go along with it. And that's what authority means.

And we get to redefine what authority means once we have the authority over ourselves, not in a well, I beat myself down so that I'm in charge of myself, but in a like, I embody myself in a wholeness that means I have authority over my own experience. I know that I create my own experience.

UFYB 195: Women & Authority

Amy: And the more women that do that, the more women feel confident doing it too, which is...

Kara: Yeah, the more we get to change what authority is like in the world. We get to change what the model of authority is like in the world so that it's not just this thing that is used to hurt or oppress or whatever else. Alright, thank you guys for coming on and talking about this. I feel like every woman needs to have a conversation with herself about how she thinks about authority and how that shows up in her life so I'm so glad that we got to talk about this.

Paige: Thank you.

Amy: Thanks for having me.

Elona: Thank you.

—

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 www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. I can't wait to see you there.