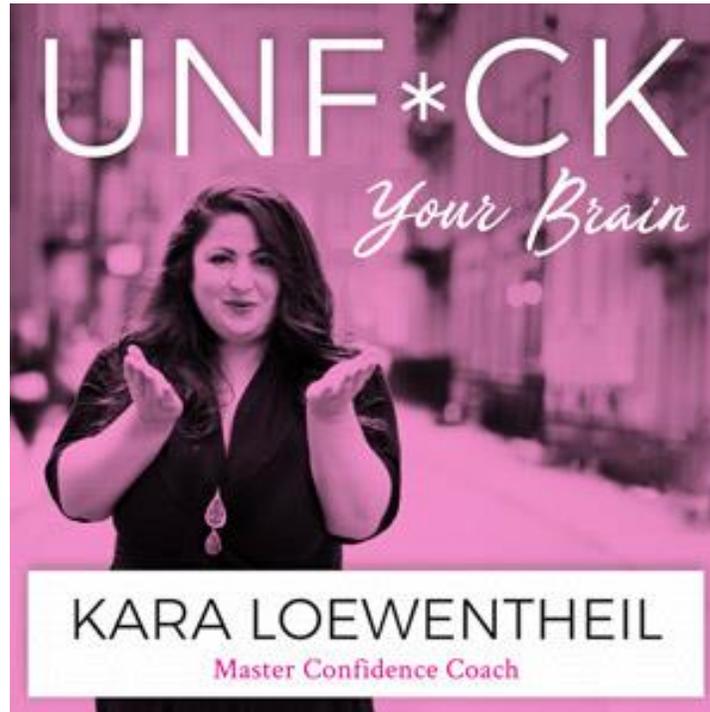


**UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships:
A Conversation with Susan Hyatt**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

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.

Kara: Alright my friends, my chickens, my fine feathered friends. What is that about, is that a Disney movie? I don't know where that's from, my fine feathered friends. We have one of my original life coaches, I think back in the day, Susan Hyatt. Which hilariously, so, Susan Hyatt is a – she's going to introduce herself with all of her accolades. But she's a life coach extraordinaire. You should know about her if you're listening to this podcast. I'm sure I've talked about her before.

But we both ironically met when Susan was still authoring and I was still taking weight loss coaching. And we've both evolved in such an interesting way on that topic which could be a whole other podcast, a whole other. Yes, and Susan will tell you about herself and her books, on all these things. But we are going to today talk about, one of Susan and my other favorite topics which is doing what the fuck you want to do and not subordinating yourself.

Susan: Apologizing.

Kara: Yeah, apologizing and subordinating yourself to all the other people in your life because of your socialization. Is that a good little mini summary?

Susan: I would say so. Not advocating for your own oppression, let's not go there.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Kara: Yes, not participating and advocating for your own oppression. Alright, tell us everything about you. Tell us about your book. Tell us about all the things.

Susan: You're the best. So, I have so many Kara stories, yes.

Kara: You may tell one embarrassing story per episode, that's the rule.

Susan: I mean you all just DM me if you want the download of Kara from back in the day. But yes, we met during my weight loss coaching days and boy have things changed because my latest book, Bare, which came out about three years ago.

Kara: Three years ago, now.

Susan: Can you believe that? It's a book on smashing diet culture and body positivity. And so, you really won't hear me talk about weight loss these days. You'll hear me talking about loving the skin that you're in and taking exceptional care of yourself, that has absolutely nothing to do with scale weight. And I'm also, you know, a master certified life coach. I run the University for Life Coach Training. So, I train other coaches. I am a mastermind leader.

I am a TEDx speaker. And I'm working on a documentary about the invisible workload of women and the emotional labor that we participate in. And so, I can't wait to talk about how to dismantle this.

Kara: Yeah, so that's what we're going to talk about today. So can you start off by telling us your thanksgiving story that I feel like doing this documentary.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: Right. Kara's DMing me and she's like, "Are you okay as you're hiking?"

Kara: And Susan is just taking solo photos of the coast of Maine during thanksgiving. I'm like, "What's happening?"

Susan: What is happening? So, what happened was like many women who are married with children I found myself right around thanksgiving just having had it up to here, Kara, with my 20 somethings, with my husband of 28 years. And we were supposed to host the family thanksgiving get together at my house. And there were just one too many things that happened where I thought...

Kara: I want to pause though, because it wasn't just for your immediate family. You were supposed to host other people too.

Susan: Yes.

Kara: Yeah, I just thought it was important for them to understand the context what you were like, "No, fuck you, thank you too." So, you were going to be hosting your family, Scott's family.

Susan: It was a whole whoop-de-do. And I started getting text messages with requests. And I started to recognize signs of entitlement among the folks around me. And I thought, you know what? I'm absolutely not participating in this, this year. So, I just sent out a group text that said, "I am unable to host thanksgiving, make alternate plans. Have a great day."

Kara: Unable to because I don't want to?

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: Really, I'm just not doing it. I'm just not doing it. And I booked a solo nine day trip to Maine. I'd always, bucket list trip, always wanted to experience Maine and all her Murders She Wrote glory. I'm like, I'm going to go solve crimes on the coast of Maine.

Kara: I'm unable to host thanksgiving because I will be solving crimes in Maine. Please address any correspondence to Susan Hyatt, lady PI.

Susan: Exactly. And I packed all my wool and my hiking boots. And I did that. And it was amazing because first of all, not one person texted me back, I have to just say. It was hilarious. It was like everyone did that...

Kara: Nobody responded?

Susan: No one responded. And it was as if the men in my life were hoping – they were just in denial.

Kara: You were like some other woman will come along and figure this out for me hopefully. Someone's going to tell me where to go for thanksgiving.

Susan: And so, when everyone realized I really was going, I had booked all the Airbnbs. I had booked the flights. I had packed my bags. They were sort of like, oh hell. And I was like, I'm just not having it. So, I went on this amazing trip. And I realized so many things. And one of the things that was interesting to observe was everyone else's reactions around me. So even one of my Airbnb hosts which I know you have some hilarious recent stories about your Airbnb host. But mine, she was delightful but she brought over a thanksgiving plate to me.

She was like, "What are you doing all alone?" And I'm like, "I am living my best life is what I'm doing. I'm not candying up any yams for nobody." And

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

so really what it was, was me just deciding I'm not going to be responsible for creating this magical holiday for everyone and I'm going to take care of myself, which is what I needed to do. I needed rest. I needed solitude. It just so happened to fall during a popular holiday in the United States and I could have cared less.

And most women were like, "Please teach me how to do that." Which of course starts with what you're so brilliant at teaching your listenership to do, which is manage your mind.

Kara: And so, let's talk about that. Let's say 10 years ago you probably wouldn't have done this, right?

Susan: No. No, 10 years ago, no.

Kara: And what do you think changed in your thought process?

Susan: I think what changed in my thought process was first the awareness that I have words now for understanding what the emotional burden is and what the invisible workload is. I spent much of my years parenting my kids, feeling I think like many women do, like I was doing it wrong. Somehow other people could seem to manage all this. What was wrong with me? And I didn't have words for this tit for tat I think that can happen in heterosexual relationships where it's like, well, I did this and you should do that. Or, here's my checklist of things I did, what did you do?

And having words for like there really is this invisible part-time job. You're not bananas. It really does exist, but guess what? Now that you're aware, I turned that awareness then into deciding, what are the conditions for me to thrive? And that is as important as everyone else thriving. And I think that was the difference. And I think that's where a lot of women get tripped up is

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

that we elevate the needs of others above our own needs which is a huge mistake and it serves no one.

Kara: Yeah, I think that is the central – sometimes when I'm teaching about what is internalized patriarchy, it's, I think it boils down to other people are more important than you. Where it's just sort of like other people's needs are more important than your needs, other people's desires are more important than your desires. Spending your time on other people is better than spending it on yourself. It's just always somebody else is more important than you.

Susan: Right. And who are you, I mean even relatives when they did start talking to me again were like, "Well, something must be critically wrong for you to leave your children on a holiday." And I'm like, "Okay, they're 21 and 23 years old."

Kara: But first of all, they're not infants. You're not like, I left them alone at home in my house. I hope Moses, the cat takes care of them.

Susan: Man. I'm like, "Are you joking right now?" Because Cora Hyatt's worried about her friends giving, she could give a rip about. And Ryan was Facetiming me like, "So what's happening in Maine again?" Just in complete, no clue. Cora was like, "Go, mom." But my point is yeah, I think that women tend to think that the family is above you and that is not true.

Kara: I think one of the things I find really – I don't know if the word is interesting, I will just say, so for those of you who don't know Susan and don't follow her on social media. I think you very famously have a great relationship with your husband and a really supportive loving one. And you're also able to be like, "Hey, this isn't cool. This is what I need or this is what I'm doing for myself", whatever. Because I think that tit for tat you're

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

talking about does often, as like this is one of the – I mean I'm always working through this myself and especially in my romantic relationships.

It's like how do you hold space, if you are, let's say a straight woman who dates men, how do you hold space for I have my structural analysis and understanding of patriarchy and feminism. And also, if I spent all my time being angry at the person I have chosen to be in a relationship with, it is going to be very unpleasant for me, probably for them also. And so, I think it's super valuable to hear how people hold both those things. Because you're not somebody who would be like, "My fucking husband, can you believe, blah, blah, blah." Maybe occasionally.

Susan: Right. I make jokes about he's not invited to our 30 year wedding renewal, vowel renewal because he wouldn't share the...

Kara: Okay, [crosstalk].

Susan: Remote, right. I make jokes like that but I love that you ask this question because it's such an example of things can be true at the same time. I can deeply love my husband and want to have an intimate relationship with him and a loving relationship with him while also making a scene about what's not okay. And one of the most hilarious examples I have recently, and I'm now calling them sink stopper moments. Where here's a man who he will call himself a feminist. He is probably as 'helpful', willing to do whatever.

He is not some guy that's just Netflixing and ignoring me and the needs of the home and family. And yet the next holiday for our family which was Christmas, his family was allowed to come over. So, I was like, "Okay, you all can come over."

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Kara: I've already compromised, I'm willing to be here, I'm not in Maine.

Susan: Right. And so, Christmas Eve rolls around, they're coming over. And that morning he bounds out of bed and he's like, "Okay, I want to help do everything so make me my list." And I'm like, "Okay, so I just want to point out, I am so happy that you want to be so helpful. But this is an example of the invisible workload because I'm the keeper of the list. So even though you want to 'help' me, this is our party, friends."

Kara: Right. It's not to help me, it's like, what's my half of things that I'm doing. Yeah, but I [crosstalk] myself.

Susan: Right. So now I have to make your list which I think is a lot of the advice for women is make them a list and tell them. And it is still more labor for us. So, I say, "Okay, go to the top of that China cabinet and get those holiday glasses and go handwash them." So, he had all kinds of opinions of how these glasses were clean and they just had a little bit of dust. And his family wouldn't care, blah, blah, blah. I'm like, "Wash the damn."

So, he goes to the sink and he gets out the darned liquid soap and he looks at the sink and in all sincerity says, "Do we have a sink stopper for this sink?" I'm like, "Excuse me, sir. Are you asking me if the sink in this kitchen, you've never used it?"

Kara: You've never done the dishes. I don't understand the story.

Susan: The dishwasher. I will tell you that Cora Hyatt will go bananas if she hears this. But he'll just leave the water running and not stop up the sink. Anyway, all this to say, I'm like, "Not only do you not know if there is one, you don't know where it is. You don't know where to look for the sink stopper?" And I'm like, "Here's another example." But I am doing it in a way

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

that's not like you're bad, you're terrible, all men are cancelled. It's sort of like, I just want to point out this is another example, so do better. Do better.

I think two things true, men need to do better and women need to advocate for themselves.

Kara: Yeah, a 100%. And I think also part of one of the places that I think that we get tripped up in our minds sometimes is because we understand patriarchy or whatever other oppressive structure we're talking about. Anything that the other person does, even if it's a normal human brain thing, we sort of attribute to that. So, in the sense that 100% there's shit in my relationship that I think my partner's in charge of. Where if I'm supposed to do something about it I'm like, "I don't know, but where is the thing? But do we even? I don't know how to do that."

Because I just have a human brain that does that. And so, I think there's part of this is balancing, understanding yes, obviously we both believe, this whole podcast is about structural oppression exists. And also, when you've chosen to engage in an intimate relationship with somebody where you want to be able to empathize with their experience and love and support them, and you want that in return. How do you keep from ascribing anything that they're personally doing to being this example of the structural oppression for which they are now in the doghouse?

I think for me this is one of the reasons that I always think it's less even about what is the motivation behind it and more just what are you available to do? You were like, "I am not available to host thanksgiving", wherever this entitlement people have is coming from." Is it coming from the patriarchy? Is it coming from how you were raised? Is it coming from white supremacy? Is it coming from whatever? Here's what I'm available for and I don't really care what your kind of source of your problem is.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: For sure, I do, I agree with you on that, that it's like once you become awake to and aware, and have words for what these things are then it becomes much more about, okay, what kind of life do I want to have? And what kind of relationship do I want to have? And then that's when you can start really showing up for your boundaries. Because I often say, when I first learned thought work, what was very helpful for me to understand was that I was not using thought work so that I could then become a doormat and be okay with unacceptable behavior.

It's like okay, let me do this thought work so that I can show up fully in my power for whatever my wants, desires and boundaries are.

Kara: Yeah, I think that's true and for me I'd also add part of the point of thought work for me is to stop believing that whatever my personal, wants, needs and boundaries are, are objectively right. And anybody who's not meeting them is bad and wrong, or everybody else should have them or whatever else.

Susan: Wait. Everyone should not want what I want, Kara.

Kara: I know, it's shocking. I think all my opinions are objectively true too. But it's actually been so helpful for me because part of the spin is when we believe that whatever our particular version of wants, needs and boundaries are is the objective correct one. Then when someone else, it doesn't work with them, then we're invested and trying to get them to see how wrong.

We're like, "No, no, these were blessed by the universe and heaven above, they're objectively correct. If you do not want to meet them or respect them you are wrong and bad. And now I've got to try to convince you and show you." As opposed to, "This is what I'm up for and if you are too then we can meet. And if not, we're not the right fit."

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: Well, that's exactly right. Then you can decide whether or not you want to love this person from afar or up close.

Kara: Right. Or up close. Sometimes close depending on the night. I definitely go from 8:00pm, I never want to be close to anyone back to my apartment, at 8:30 being like, "Could you back up a little bit please?" Okay. So, let's talk about some of these thought patterns, because we could just shoot the shit forever. We are having a very insightful illuminating conversation, shooting the shit.

Susan: Of course.

Kara: But we could just go like this forever. Let's talk about those thought patterns. So, one of the things I see, I am such a pragmatist ultimately. I'm always just like, "Okay, I wish we could stop and fix society and we should work on it." And also, I have, I don't know, 40/60 years left. What am I going to do now in my life to be able to have the life I want? And one of the things that I think comes up is that especially with the kind of backdrop of being able to understand the structural forces of the invisible workload and emotional labor.

One of the reasons that women get tied up in being very angry, and resentful, and resisting, and wanting their partner to be different is that they're comfortable with that form of discomfort. And then uncomfortable with the discomfort that would come if they actually did what you did. They're very comfortable with the discomfort of feeling angry and put upon. They know how to feel that. And I'm not saying that that's invalid or unjustified.

It's just a comfortable place where even though it feels bad, whereas it feels so uncomfortable and so identity conflicting to say, "I'm not doing thanksgiving." I'm going to violate what society says a good mom is. I'm

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

going to violate what society says a good wife is, a good partner is, a good friend is. I am going to put myself first, that's so deeply uncomfortable that we would rather be mad and try to change the other person's behavior because that seems easier somehow. That's what's so crazy about brains.

We're like, it's definitely going to be easier to make this other change than to change my own thought process here. So, what do you think about that? We talked about how you made that – you did make that transition but what are the baby steps that women can do to start dealing with the discomfort that is going to come up?

So often when I coach somebody about this and I'm like, "Okay, so if you and your husband", or partner, whoever, this obviously is not only in straight couples, it's just certainly maybe more dominant or at least the cultural conversation around it is in straight couples. Although it can be reverse, I mean I definitely know people who are straight couples where the husband is the one who does all the domestic stuff but whatever it is.

Susan: Yeah, I mean there are anomalies but by and large women are primarily the ones dealing with this in heterosexual relationships, yeah.

Kara: Yeah. So, when I am coaching someone on this and we get to the point where I'm like, "Okay, you and your partner you literally want to participate equally. You guys did sit down together, come up with a list, break it down. There's the moment where you step in and do it anyway because you're afraid they won't do it right or they're going to forget." And there's that, "But what do you mean, just let my kid go to school without a lunch if their father didn't make it?"

Or, "What do you mean just let the house be dirty before people come over?" That I think is the next barrier that women have to deal with. So, what do you think about how women can get over that discomfort?

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: Well, there is a couple of things. So one is that awareness and being angry, yes. And so, it's deciding not just to be angry but to make a scene within yourself and then outwardly.

Kara: Tell us what you mean by make a scene. We don't mean throw a vase at somebody's head?

Susan: No, right. Making a scene, although lots of people think it's flipping tables and breaking up domestic violence disputes. Making a scene is really about harnessing your power within to make change externally. And so, for me when I say, make a scene, it's okay, now is the time to do something internally and externally to signal to life, the world, those around you, this is what matters to me. And so, when I was learning this and gaining this awareness, the lunch thing was absolutely a thing that happened.

Where it was allowing those around you to experience natural consequences to things being done or not done, which I think for women can be really, really challenging. Because it is engrained in us to take care of everyone and prevent these kinds of things from happening. And so, it's like sending your kid to school potentially with no lunch, okay, well, they might have to have an IOU or have a PBNJ or whatever, their dad get the phone call that there's no lunch.

When I was the primary point of contact with my children's school, I lovingly talk about Ryan James Hyatt all the time about how schools had me on speed dial. When he entered the fifth grade I made the change and let Scott Hyatt know, "You are now the primary contact for school. They will be contacting you first if there is a missed lunch, if there's a whatever." Was it absolutely difficult and challenging for me? Yes, but I had to remind myself that it is not my destiny to be responsible for every single person around me.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

I'm not responsible for the cleanliness of this house, looking like a pottery barn ad. I am not responsible for my children's behavior. I am not responsible for my husband's happiness. I am responsible for me and my mental health and that needs to come first. So, when he started getting those phone calls, Kara, do you know he came home, he was like, "Wow, they call a lot." Yeah, they do, they call a lot. And he was the one rushing up there if Ryan got suspended that day or whatever was happening. There was a lot.

So, I think that it's being willing to allow other people to experience discomfort. We want to take on all the discomfort for everybody. That is not our job. They can go hungry. They can be cold with no coat. The house can look like hell when company comes over. There can be no dinner. I'm constantly like, "I don't know. Don't ask me what's for dinner."

Kara: [Crosstalk]. So, I think for women who want or for anybody who wants to be trying to work on this, you have to go to what comes up for you when you think about your kid going to school and not having their lunch. And then what the kid is going to feel and what the teacher's going to think. You have to go to that and see, what are you making that mean. You're going to make it mean that I'm a bad mother, I don't take care of my kids. The school thinks whatever. My child thinks I don't care.

You have to go to that place and do that thought work around that or else you're never going to be able, I think, to make that transition because you're just always going to feel more comfortable. And women are socialized and rewarded for being martyrs. So, it's going to feel more comfortable to just do everything, feel terrible about it, feel mad about it. It doesn't feel good but it feels comfortable. It's so important to remember that through your brain. Something may feel horrible and yet your brain still prefers that to unknown discomfort. You're going to have to take it to that place.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: And I also think what's interesting about this and women being willing to be wildly uncomfortable and out of their normal comfort zone with allowing other people to experience a whole range of emotions that they're not responsible for is that I was talking with a client just yesterday. And she was in a heterosexual marriage. She is now divorced. And she is in a lesbian relationship and she said, "I spent a lot of time leaning on my female friends to sort of navigate this invisible workload and this emotional burden."

And she was like, "And truly now that I'm in a same sex relationship there's two people concerned about what's going on. It's two people picking up socks off the floor, two people." And I thought that was so interesting because I do think that this is primarily in heterosexual relationships and it is the programming that we receive. Whether we think we're conscious to it or not that women need to do certain things to be deemed worthy of being a good mother, worthy of being a good wife, a good community member, whatever it might be.

And so, I think that it's, yeah, what are you making it mean. And are you willing to have people look at your post on Facebook and say, "What the hell, you left your family on thanksgiving?" You're damn right I did. I bet I had a better holiday than you.

Kara: Yeah. I mean that willingness to feel that discomfort and I think that – I mean one of the things I recommend people do when they're dealing with a set of thoughts, feelings and experiences is also to do a – write it all down. What are all the things that get done and who does them. Because part of, I think, what does happen is that we know that the way the brain works is that when you believe something you're always looking for more evidence of it. And so, it becomes a sort of emotional self-fulfilling prophecy.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

And then we can get lost I think in the emotional drama of the unfairness. Which is when it's an awareness issue it's helpful and important. After that when we're just swimming in it and resisting it, we're not getting much out of it. We're not catalyzing change at that point. So, when you recognize that that unfairness is going, I think step one is get an accurate inventory, write it all down. And it is, you are quite likely right about the distribution. But also, when you do that you will see that, in my experience most people when they do this, there is some stuff that their partner does that they never do.

And he's seeing that and being like, "Okay, what's happening is that we have an unequal distribution that I want to equalize." Rather than, I think some people store processes, like my partner is a freeloader who does nothing and I do everything. And maybe when you write it all down that's what you see. And then you have a bigger different conversation or decision to make about your relationship.

Susan: Well, I absolutely do know women where that is the case. And I do think taking an inventory is important.

Kara: Yeah, it's awful either way.

Susan: Right, either way, you can recognize, okay, because Scott loves to tell me everything he did. He wants me to know and yet I do think though when you are writing it all down and categorizing it, I mean part of the exhaustion that women do feel is that emotional burden that's hard to document. Because I used to make the joke when my children were really little, I didn't have words for any of this. And I would say, "I just wish that a film crew could follow the two of us around and take a tally and then at the end of the week say who did more. And it would be me."

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Not helpful but part of the problem is that even if a film crew followed you and your spouse around, that's why it's called invisible, there is so much that's happening that is the emotional mood management of the family, all this kind of stuff. And some of the emotional burden I will say is super valuable and I don't want to get rid of it. I enjoy being a woman who is compassionate and thinks about her family in a healthy way. It can turn to the dark side where we're obsessively worrying about things we have zero control over.

Kara: I think that's part of why it's so important to take that honest inventory. Because I think what you're actually going to find is there's multiple categories. There are categories where both people agree it needs to be done in the partnership. And then you need to figure out how to split that up fairly if that's what you guys want to do. I also think there are categories of things that one person cares about and the other doesn't. And then you have to learn how to negotiate that. Sometimes you're going to agree to both pretend to care about it or you're not.

And then there are things, I know for instance in my relationship I am the person who mentally is keeping track and planning ahead on a lot of the calendaring and scheduling stuff. But the reason that that's happening is that I am someone who likes to know six weeks ahead of time what I'm doing and my partner isn't. And it's important for me to understand that yes, it is invisible labor I'm doing but also it's because I'm the one who wants that as opposed to this is the objective way people should be.

So, I think when you get that – it's almost like that – I mean I don't really teach about AA obviously but it's like that honest inventory. I think part of this whole process in building a relationship that works for both people is that honest self-accounting of yes, these are things that we both agree need to be done and this is not a fair split. And somebody does need to be, even though it's stuff that is invisible, writing all of that out and being like,

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

“Okay, worrying that our child should never have a negative thought about me because it means I’m a bad mother.”

That is not a thing that we both should be doing and actually I’m going to take that to my coach. Thinking about whether the grandparents got holiday presents, that is something that we both think should happen and we need to both be worrying about that. I think just always what I want people to be doing when they are dealing with – I think this is like a microcosm of a lot of what I teach which is when you are dealing with the way that your personal life and psychology impacts with a structural problem is how do we sort that out?

And I think one of the ways we do that is to get really clear on it’s never either or, it’s always and. Here are the ways this is unfair and it’s impacting my life. And here are the ways that I need to ask my partner to change and see if they will. And here are the ways that I can change part of it and see if I will. It’s getting a fuller picture of it and not sort of living in a state of extreme in either way.

Susan: Right. And right, we’ve been married 28 years, we’ve been together 30 years. And our relationship has evolved, and expanded, and changed so much over those past 30 years and it continues to. And it’s now in a place where new things surface all the time where it’s like, okay, well, does this matter to the two of us like you’re saying? And who’s in charge of that? And it may depend on who has the capacity at the time. But it’s really different than it was when I was a new parent. And I assumed a lot of things, took a lot of things on just because of programming.

And I think that when women start to do this then you can make some decisions about what you want to do, how you want to spend your time. And one of the things that I did was I started hiring out help because there were certain things like you’re saying, that needed to be done that weren’t

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

a priority in Scott's world, that are a priority in mine. And so, it's like, I still don't have to be the one to do it even though he's not going to do it.

Kara: Yeah. And I think that's such a beautiful example of your relationship has changed over time because I think that's sort of one of the things I'm sort of returning to in this conversation because I feel there's so much conversation out there, and it's good that it's out there about the emotional labor and the invisible workload. So, I don't feel that piece is missing from cultural consciousness. But I think what people need support or tools for are the part that they can work on in themselves.

And also, it's just much harder to hold space for another flawed human being and try to negotiate and evolve a relationship that is more fair. That's just always harder than being mad about it. And then either doing it all yourself or hating them and going to the next one or whatever. I think these are the nuanced conversations of if you do want to be with the person you're with, maybe you go through this whole thing. You're like, man, that person does not care at all about how much work I do or what's going on. They're not willing to do anything.

And now the self-coaching I'm going to have to do is about why am I in this relationship if this person doesn't want to be partner with me? And if you are in one where you do want to stay in it, it's how do you hold and negotiate that space where you can both advocate for yourself, call attention to what's unfair? And still be in a loving relationship with someone in a way that acknowledges their capacity to change also.

Susan: Totally. And I think it is work, it is more labor. And it's a decision. I could simply say at this stage of my life, and I think quite honestly sometimes Scott Hyatt is like, "Man, she's going to be out of here."

Kara: I'm not coming home one day and it's going to be Maine forever.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: I mean, but I think that it's making the decision, marriage is this way anyway. Any long term relationship is deciding every single day or every single year, yeah, we're going to renew this lease and what does it look like to continue and thrive in this relationship? And if the person that you want to have a relationship with is not willing to have those conversations, or change, or evolve then that's a completely different kind of coaching, self-coaching, like you said.

Kara: Yeah, totally. I work with Maggie Reyes on relationship coaching stuff and she's a marriage coach. But she says this thing that I think, it's so useful both with partners, but I kind of want to end on it because it's for ourselves too. She says, "It's judge or evaluate", you can use either word. But judge the willingness, not the execution which I think that is such a beautiful piece of grace both for yourself and your partner. Obviously eventually execution matters.

Susan: I was going to say, my mind was just like, don't let Scott Hyatt hear this. He's enthusiastic in the moment.

Kara: I know, but I think that what it means is – I mean what I would say is if somebody never executes they weren't really willing. But it's more like it's space for it to be messy, and hard, and to have to have more than one conversation about it. And for somebody to try to do better and not get it perfect right away. I mean I think, I notice in myself that I have the same unreasonable expectations for my partner as I do for myself in terms of, okay, well, now this has been pointed out to you as insight of what the problem is.

So, I'm confused about why the next day your whole brain has not completely changed and you are not doing everything differently. And I have that about myself too, so it's one-to-one.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

Susan: It's a good point.

Kara: It's not both for ourselves and our partner. If you're the person trying to feel okay about your kid missing soccer practice, or your in-laws coming over and the house isn't clean or whatever else that you and your partner have agreed to do and letting them fail at it. Or letting it be done in the way that isn't the way you'd would want it to be done. It's going to take a few tries before you can feel comfortable with that. You're going to have to coach yourself through it each time. That doesn't mean something's gone wrong, that's just normal.

And the same is true for your partner, it's going to take a few tries before they are changing whatever it is you've agreed you're going to change. It goes exactly back to what you're saying, it's to do anything new to create a new kind of relationship or a new relationship in your own life to these things you have to allow that you're going to fail the first few times and it's going to be hard and to keep going.

Susan: And you are worth advocating for. You are worth not sucking it up and just doing it yourself, it is worth doing this hard deep work.

Kara: Yes, a 100% because there's so much freedom on the other side when you actually, it's touching but also a little tragic. Often the best way I find to get women to see this is to be like, "Okay, is this what you want your children to learn about the generals?" And all of a sudden they're like, "Oh, no. It's okay for me but I don't want my children to learn that." And whatever it is you don't want your children to learn and emulate, you are worthy of making sure that that's your reality too, not just for their sake.

Susan: Right, I agree. And seeing the reactions from each of my children about this, it's really fascinating to watch and see how in some ways it's been very successful that their generation it is different. And then in other

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

ways it's like, wow, it's still showing up in these ways. And again, none of us are perfect people, it's all ever evolving. We're always having these conversations in my household, and healthy debates, and arguments about it. And we're all messy humans. And so, it's a dedication to vulnerability and intimacy.

Kara: Yeah, I love that. Alright, where can people find you?

Susan: They can find me, my brand new website is launching this week, susanhyatt.co. And obviously on social media @susanhyatt.

Kara: Is there another Susan Hyatt do a susanhyatt.com? That is very rude of her.

Susan: So, there is an 80 something, she may be 90 now, year old woman with susanhyatt.com. And every year on my birthday, Scott Hyatt contacts her and asks if he can buy it.

Kara: There, that is one of the things he does in the relationship.

Susan: He does, and she says no every year. She's not doing anything with it but one day I'll have it.

Kara: One day her heirs will let you have it.

Susan: Yes.

Kara: Alright, my friends, go check it out, we'll talk to you next week.

Susan: Thank you.

UFYB 228: Women's Invisible Workload, Emotional Labor, and Romantic Relationships: A Conversation with Susan Hyatt

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.