

UFYB 237: How Productivity Culture Burns You Out: An Interview with Tina Koch and Rachèle Summers



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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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.

Alright my friends, if you have been feeling burnt the fuck out then this is for you. So here is how to know if you're feeling burnt out. Do you feel like you wake up in the morning and you are already tired? Do you feel like you are at the edge of your rope and about one small mishap away from completely losing your shit? Spill the coffee and that's it, you'd rather just lay down on the floor and die. Am I right?

Do you feel like you are snapping at your kids and your partner, or your parents, or your coworkers more than you mean to, you keep telling yourself that you'd like to stop doing that and be better about it and feel nicer? But then the next minute there you are snapping again. You just don't have a lot of emotional energy, you're overwhelmed, you're exhausted, you take a vacation you still don't really feel any better. The weekend feels like it's over before it began and you feel like you didn't get anything done but you also didn't rest.

These are all signs of burnout. So, if you're feeling this way you are not alone. I feel like we are in a global burnout right now between years of the pandemic, inflation, prices are rising. The global warming is continuing to accelerate. There is a war in Ukraine. And every time you turn on the news something else terrible seems to be happening. And you're tired and your kids have been in and out of school because of COVID and you've been working from home or you're back at the office and no one is wearing their mask, whatever is going on you're not alone in feeling this way.

But here's the other thing I want you to know. Even though it really feels like burnout is created by the world, which is why so many of us are feeling

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it right now, there is actually a lot you can do in your own brain to heal and prevent burnout. So, to heal the burnout you're already having, to create more energy, to create more resilience, to create more ability to feel rested, and happy and enjoy your life even in these circumstances and to prevent future burnout from happening.

Because the world is always going to be coming up with new shit that we need to deal with. But we can have so much more control than we think over how we think and feel in response to it. So that is why I have created the 2022 Burnout Breakthrough because I know that so many of you are suffering and your suffering is not necessary. It doesn't need to be this way.

You actually can take control of your own thought process and learn how to process and get through your emotions in a cleaner faster way, how to experience whatever's going on without feeling so exhausted and overwhelmed. And how to refill your own cup and I promise the solution is not a bubble bath. If you follow me on social media, you know I love a fucking love bubble bath. I pick hotel rooms for their bathtubs. A bath is not the solution to burnout.

Working with your brain and your nervous system to create resilience, that is the solution to burnout. And that is what I'm going to be teaching in the 2022 Burnout Breakthrough. So, I want to invite you to come check it out. We are open for registration for this. This is all going to start on June 6th. So, you've got a couple of days to get signed up and get ready. This is the most cutting edge, most effective simplest techniques that I have ever put together and taught on burnout and on how to break through it, and overcome it, and prevent it.

So, here's how you can find out more. Go to unfuckyourbrain.com/breakthrough, all one word. Or text your email to +1347 997 1784 and when you get prompted for the code word send the

[UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/breakthrough)

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code word 'breakthrough'. And we will send you the link. It's going to be five days of training and live Q&A. And there's going to be even opportunities for live coaching which usually you can only get if you're inside *The Clutch*. But we are going to do some in the Burnout Breakthrough.

So, five days starting on June 6th. There is going to be an exclusive popup Facebook group where you can get answers to your questions. I'm going to be in there. We're going to have *The Clutch* coaches in there. So, there's going to be other Clutch members in there who are also really great at using these tools. It's not *The Clutch* Facebook group. It is a popup group that'll be up just for the duration of the Burnout Breakthrough week. But it's a place you can ask questions, share what you're working on, get help as you're applying what I'm teaching.

We're going to have live training every day. We are going to have live Q&A, live coaching. You're also going to get a chance to join *The Clutch* and enjoy exclusive bonus coaching calls inside before we open *The Clutch* to the public again. We haven't been open for six months. But if you're in the challenge, you get a chance to join before everyone else and get bonus coaching calls. And we're going to be teaching a bonus masterclass.

The fifth day of training is actually going to be an even longer Burnout Breakthrough masterclass, a full hour where I'm going to kind of go over what I've taught you before and then take it to the next level even deeper and give you an even better sense of how you can use this work going forward. So that the next time or now that things seem overwhelming you have the tools to kind of cut burnout off before it really sets in. It's noticing that first sniffle and taking that vitamin C and zinc so that you never develop the full cold. That's what we really want for you.

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So, all of that is the Burnout Breakthrough. It is all of that, the five days of training and live Q&A, the live coaching, the popup Facebook group with support there. The Burnout Breakthrough Solution which is a workbook that you can only get through this challenge that has these exercises that I'm going to be teaching on how to create more resilience, and heal burnout, and prevent it from happening again. Only available as part of the challenge as well. All of that is – drumroll - \$37 which is the most affordable, most accessible way to work with me.

If \$37 is truly not affordable to you, you can always email us and we will help you out. The link is on that same information page that you can get with the text that I'm going to tell you about again in a minute. And when you get that chance to join *The Clutch* early, you're going to get that chance to apply your Burnout Breakthrough investment to your first month of *The Clutch*. So, it's truly a win/win.

Go to unfuckyourbrain.com/breakthrough, all one word. Or text your email to +1347 997 1784 and when you're prompted for the code word you send the word 'breakthrough', all one word. And we will send you the link to sign up. So, I cannot wait to see you there. And I cannot tell you how much this training is going to change your life. It's changed mine just putting it together. I cannot wait to share it with you. I will see you guys there.

—

Kara: Alright, my chickens, I'm very excited for this conversation. I know I say that every time but every time it's true. Every time I'm like, oh my God, it's so brilliant especially when I am talking to students from my Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching. Because it's just always incredible to have people come into this program and bring their own genius, their own lived experience, their own kind of diversity of thought and experience. And

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then combine it with the work we do there. And it just creates such powerful teaching and coaching.

So, I'm super excited for you guys to hear this conversation. So, I'm going to let them give further introductions themselves. But I'm with two of my students, Tina Koch, I was practicing your pronunciation, and Rachèle Summers.

Tina: You've done really well.

Kara: Right. Yes. All that hubris school paid off with that sound. And so how would you define your niche, Tina, actually, what's the one sentence version?

Tina: I have two separate ones.

Kara: Alright, lay it on us.

Tina: So, I work in two capacities in my private practice. So, one is as a mentor for people in the performing arts. So, I help them get their work made, sold and seen. But I've found now that it involves a mix of strategy, that's what they come for but then they end up doing mostly mindset work. And then the second one is as a coach and I help people understand, and learn, internalize ableism. And mainly I would say I attract people that are overwhelmed with everything that's going on, all they have to do or think they have to do.

And somehow even though they try so hard to do all the things, they think they're not doing enough.

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Kara: Yeah. And we're going to get way more into that for sure. And then Rachèle is an Advanced Certified Life and Confidence Coach. And who do you coach, Rachèle?

Rachèle: Yeah. So, I basically coach who I was about five years ago. So, I coach working moms who are close to burnout. And often what happens is we don't know what's happening. We've been having this superwoman syndrome for all our lives. And then we have kids and we're still trying to do it all. And we are working full-time and trying to be the mom that we're 'supposed to be'. And we burn out or we close to burnout and literally we don't know what's happening. And that's what happened to me.

So, I help my ladies create simple selfcare routines. I'm, apart from just being a life coach I'm also a feng shui consultant. So, using the environment as well and senses as well. I use a lot of essential oils to help regulate the nervous system as well.

Kara: Great. So, I actually would love to hear from both of you before we get into the substance of what we're talking about, kind of your own stories that led you to coaching and to this kind of niche. So, Tina, do you want to share with us and then Rachèle can also fill us in?

Tina: Yeah. So, I have a history in the performing arts. So, I am a professional aerialist, which means I'm a professional trapeze artist. And I was touring the world with shows, had a very successful company. And then I had an accident that totally stopped me in my tracks. And what led me into coaching was that I discovered your podcast actually, Kara, on my hospital bed. And I was binge listening to it through sleepless nights and got totally hooked with thought work.

And as soon as I could move my first finger I signed up to *The Clutch* and I haven't looked back since. And then a year later I trained at The Life Coach

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School where you also trained. And now I'm in Advanced Education Feminist coaching. And really what I think why I'm so passionate about this work is that I have noticed that especially in the performing arts, I guess, wider, is the sort of what I had, it was laudable to do all-nighters, to work all night and never have a break. I literally was directing shows, going to the next one, checking on a show on tour.

And then I had, when I had my son, I literally gave birth and went straight into rehearsal to direct a show. And I would say that led in the end to me having an accident because I was just completely exhausted.

Kara: That's such a powerful story. I actually feel I remember. I can't remember if I coached you or you wrote me an email. I remember reading about your story before I met you in person. I heard about your story before you came into ACFC and just thinking, just what an example of how thought work can lead people and help them when they find it in a really challenging time.

Tina: So, you coached me.

Kara: I did coach you, yes, that's right.

Tina: I came to Clutch College, yes, and you coached me on my impossible goal because I wanted to walk.

Kara: That's right, I knew.

Tina: And it was really interesting and you were telling me that. And I still hadn't at that point put two and two together because I literally sort of forced myself back into walking out of a wheelchair. And you were like, "Right. So, if you can force yourself or hate yourself out of the wheelchair, what can you achieve if you try [crosstalk]?"

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Kara: If you maybe like yourself, this is – I mean if we ever made a broken record of me it would be, okay, you've accomplished all this by hating yourself. Now what if we tried liking ourselves? And of course, all my students think then, I won't do anything and I would lie on the floor. And of course, that's not true, as you've experienced because actually you still walk and it's nicer when you're not hating yourself. What about you, Rachèle, can you tell us a little bit that – I think we all coach people who were us five to ten years ago, but tell us your story.

Rachèle: Right, exactly. So, I was working in the corporate world in the UK. I'm based in the UK. And I got to a point where my kids started school. And I was at my desk, I'll never forget, I was at my desk and my manager came over to speak to me. And she just said, "Good morning", and I burst into tears, one good morning and I couldn't stop. Once the floodgates opened I couldn't stop. It was just on the train to work, back from work, wherever I was, in the bath, I was just crying and I didn't know what was happening.

And I was getting psoriasis and eczema all over my body. And I literally had no idea. And I was told I was close to a nervous breakdown, just literally burnt out. And I was seeing therapist after therapist, amazing women but what we were doing was we were dredging up the past. And I was telling my story again, and again, and again. And I was just like, "This is great but I can't tell this story anymore, I'm done with the story." I really want some tools to move forward. And I fell into Brooke's funnel of CCP. I'd never heard of life coaching before, literally never, didn't know what it was.

And I just saw this woman on the screen saying, "Do you even know what flower you like? Do you even know what you want to do tomorrow? What do you want to eat for dinner?" And I was like, "No, I don't, I've lost myself. I don't even know what flower I like, what is it?" So, I fell into that funnel and I signed up for CCP which is coach training with The Life Coach School. And I didn't know what it was what I was getting into but I just knew I had to

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do it. I knew that these were the tools to get me out. And I've never looked back from there, then obviously joining your program.

Kara: I think we've all been in that place where we feel so burned out that we would cry at any opportunity. I mean that is one of the kind of things I say about how you know you're burnt out is that you stub your toe and you're like, "That's it, I'm just going to lay down and die." My emotional resilience right now is so low and my nervous is so agitated that the smallest thing just completely sets you off. You have this disproportionate emotional reaction to whatever's going on.

And it's so challenging because on some level, when something dramatic happens it's easier to believe ourselves about all of our drama. But when you're sobbing because you stubbed your toe, you're like, "This is crazy. I know that this isn't proportional but I don't know what's wrong with me. There must just be something wrong with me. I can't cope with daily life." Because you don't realize how burnt out you are. We're going to talk a lot about this and I'm doing the Burnout Breakthrough in a couple of weeks which I'll talk more about in a minute.

But this is the problem with burnout is we use that term all the time and people are constantly talking about it but I don't feel like anybody actually knows what it means, or how to know when you're burnt out or what to do about it. But I think one of the signs, if you are trying to figure out if you are burnt out, it is that emotional gas tank is so low that you just have no resilience or ability to cope left. You are just one tiny thing away from a nervous breakdown at all times. And it doesn't really ever get refilled.

It's like one in the tank and maybe you go to sleep and you get to point two. But then one thing goes wrong and now you're at negative again. And it's like you can't ever get past that feeling that you're just on the edge of losing your shit all the time.

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Rachèle: Right. And like I said, therapy really helped and I see so many of my friends going through it as well and they just think they need to give up work. Or they just think they need to be, you know, we know that there's other ways of doing it.

Kara: Well, yeah, and if you keep your thoughts, you can stop going to the office but you're still going to have your thoughts. And I'm curious what you or Tina think. So, before we get into the why, signs or symptoms of burnout. What does it really kind of mean, burnout to you guys, and how do you know if that's what you're experiencing?

Tina: I think I said it actually in the beginning when I was talking about the people that I tend to attract. I think it's a definition of Emily and Amelia Nagoski, that wrote that book, *Burnout: How to Complete the Stress Cycle*. I don't know exactly, I'll probably say it wrong. They describe it as just looking, if you look at your life and you just see a mountain of stuff that you have to do and you have to cope. And you just feel completely overwhelmed.

And the second part of that is that you just try and outdo that. So, you're finding yourself in a situation where you are completely overwhelmed but you're doing all the things and still whatever you do is not enough and you can't get on top of it. And then from personal experience of a very good friend with burnout and it was what you said, Kara, is you wake up one morning and that was what you said Rachèle, is that you just couldn't stop crying.

And I think ultimately though, you can change your circumstances but the work you have to do is in your mind and how you see things. I think it starts when you say, "How do you notice", I think it starts very little with I haven't had a very productive day. I could be further along. I should be doing more. I'm not really pulling my weight. I have to get this done. And then freaking

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out about that. And I think there's also a sense of depersonalization sometimes that you just, you can't care anymore about certain things.

Kara: I think that's such a good point because there's really a spectrum. And so, when I think about burnout and when I've been thinking about creating this Burnout Breakthrough. Some people are already listening to this and they're like, "Yes, I'm at the I can't stop crying all the time point. I'm already there. I'm already completely overwhelmed. I already can't cope with my life." Well, so on the spectrum.

And then there's people at the beginning of the spectrum and I think what you're saying is so important. That's like you want to start paying attention to it before you get to the point. If you're already at the point where you're crying all the time, that's totally fine, this will still help, this episode will help. The Burnout Breakthrough we're doing will help. These amazing coaches can help you.

But it's good to get on top of it if you can before you get to that point, not wait until that point and noticing those little bits of am I already having the thoughts that are going to, if left untreated sort of, and they compound are going to lead me to burnout. I think the other thing that I find if I am starting to feel a little burnt out is certainly that overwhelm but also the sort of – it's not as strong as hopelessness because I think that's more when you're getting into depression and you maybe need more formal therapy support.

But it's just, it is the sort of I don't feel like I'll ever get a break kind of, or the sort of feeling of even when I get a break I don't really feel rested. So, the weekend doesn't feel like enough, or even you take a vacation and that doesn't feel like enough. Or it just feels like when you look forward, you're sort of just like, "Oh God, I don't know when I'm going to not feel like this." It just feels like these problems are never ending. I think that, it's not

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hopelessness but it's just kind of low level sort of I don't see an end in sight and I don't foresee a time when I feel resilient and excited again.

It's like that kind of, it can be this low level emotional state that also is important to watch out for. It's the times that I start to feel a little burnt out I notice that I when I do take a break it's not helping. I believe a lot obviously you work, and you rest, and you play. And when the rest and the play don't seem to refill the tank, that's when you know that you may be having a problem even if you're not yet at the, we've been on the train all the time.

Rachèle: Right. And often when you go on holiday you get ill, you'll go on vacation, sorry, if holiday doesn't make sense, you go away.

Kara: I was actually just thinking, I love that. I actually want to say go on holiday all the time. I feel that sounds so much more fun than going on a vacation.

Rachèle: So, you go away and this used to happen to me and my husband. We'd go away somewhere luxurious and beautiful, and you'd just get the flu and just feel dreadful because your body was like, I can actually stop for a moment and I feel exhausted. And the other symptom I found was lack of sleep. I was waking up at three in the morning every night and having, Tina said, a whole to-do list of things going through my brain of I should be doing this. I need to be doing this. Don't forget that. What about this.

And again, I remember my male boss saying to me, "Well, I have just as much to do as you do and I don't wake up at three in the morning every night. That's not right." And I was thinking, oh gosh, is this not a thing? I thought everybody woke up at three in the morning. So that was also another red flag.

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Kara: It's such a good point though, that we think going on vacation should be restful because we're not doing the work. But if your brain is constantly thinking about it, it doesn't really matter what your hands are doing, whether you're typing on the computer or not. If your brain is just still in that, you don't know how to turn it off or redirect it, you're going to have that problem.

So, let's talk a little bit about kind of what creates this because I know that both of you kind of work quite a bit on how, and we obviously talk in ACFC all the time about how women are socialized and what the social expectations and the messaging they get are that create this. And of course, not only women get burned out. But we are really focused on people socialized as women. So, I'd love to hear kind of both of your takes on what creates that, what kind of socialization goes into that?

Tina: So, the common thread that I see in clients is this underlying belief that we're only good enough when we're producing. And I would call it, and I think some people are going to jump at this. What? I'm going to throw it out there anyway. I think at the heart of it is internalized capitalism. And what I mean with that is this idea that our self-worth is directly linked to our productivity and how much capital, our contributions to society create.

So, it's almost like you can't feel value in yourself for just being alive and just for being a human being. And you have to be a human doing to have any value. And for women I think in particular, it's not just in the workplace, it's also like we have to produce children, we have to produce meals. And just going very stereotypical obviously, and I think generally I would say I see so much of a feeling guilty when you rest, undervaluing achievements and prioritizing work and all the things you have to do in life over your own wellbeing.

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It's almost like everybody else first, me last, that plays into that as well for women. And I think it's not just women, I was thinking – I will just say this one more thing. I think everybody in the capitalistic society is vulnerable to internalizing ideas to connect your value to your work rather than who you are or your output rather to who you are. But I think it plays out differently depending on your social position. So, there's gender but there's also if you have a privileged background, you might have intense pressure to achieve because that's just what your family expects you to do.

But then when you're from a less privileged background you might be having all these immense economic pressures on you. Or sometimes if you're a woman of color, just speaking to my friend Kalen the other day and she was saying there's so much pressure on her to be twice as good and have twice as much, be twice as productive as a woman of color than her white counterparts.

Kara: Yeah. I think it all goes to, as you were talking I was thinking about the idea that I think everybody of course is subject to this, well, if you live in a capitalist society, the capitalist socialization. And I think there is a kind of puritan religious socialization that goes on too. That's sort of work is virtuous, idleness is sinful. There is a reason that that and capitalism merged so intensely in America.

But I think the reason that it's worse for women and then doubly worse for each marginalized identity kind of is like the more that you are taught that you need to prove that you're worth existing basically. The more intense this is going to be. So, women are taught that, women of color hear that even more, with every marginalized identity there is even more socialization around. You need to justify your existence and why you are good enough to be here and just be alive.

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So, on top of whatever actual economic pressure, you have to produce enough money to stay alive, at least in the US where we don't have the great social safety net. There is also this internalized, you're constantly trying to prove that you're good enough, that you're worthy, that you deserve anything and that just gets kind of compounded as you go along.

Tina: Yeah. And what you always say in ACFC is that we as women just outsource other people to determine how valuable we are. It's obviously just our default setting that is harder.

Kara: Right, yeah. And our default setting from socialization, totally. What about you, Rachèle, what do you think?

Rachèle: Yeah. And I think with my clients what we notice is that before having children it's almost like you're in hustle mode and you can do it. You can do all the things you're supposed to, achieve what you're supposed to achieve, get the job, go to the gym, look this way, act this way. And then something happens obviously when you have the children and there's just a whole another to-do list on top of everything that you're trying to do. And I think that's how I found almost this collapse happens where it's just like I can't possibly cope with all of this.

And coming from, as you know, Jewish and Asian background, it's like the matriarch is the person who looks after the home. We're feeders traditionally, I still cook all the meals from scratch. And it's like this is how we look after our family. So, we know going back in the day it was the man worked and the woman was at home doing that. And now I think it's great that we have all these opportunities to do both and it's exhausting.

And where we find the burnout happening, Tina and I were speaking about this yesterday is that we don't feel like we can just be worthy and just stop. And give up some of those things without losing our identity. So, I still want

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to be the careerwoman. I still want to be independent financially. I still want to feed my children and look after the family, and do the washing, and manage the school diary. And it is just something we do. And I'm sure there are lots of men out there that do it as well.

But this is how I've found, and you can almost see even family members where they've had children, and top lawyers going, "Oh, I'm finding this hard now."

Kara: Yeah. I mean if you're hustling at your top ability and then you add on a whole other thing that's when you topple over I think. But I think, we've talked on the podcast quite a bit now. We've done two episodes kind of on the second shift that so many women or people socialized as women take up particularly if they're in heterosexual relationships. We had Shawna, your ACFC colleague talking on the last podcast about how the studies show that in same sex relationships it's usually negotiated more equally because you're not falling back on these default roles that we've all absorbed.

And so yeah, there's social structural change we need and also even if there was also all the social structural change, if your thought process is still, this is what I have to do to be a good worker, and be a good mother, and be a good wife, and be a good person. You'll still be trying to do it all. And you will still of course, and I'm trying to bring out, you will end up burning out because you're trying to do three things at once all perfectly and putting your self-worth on all of that.

So, I also want to kind of have you guys share some about, we've talked about this internalized capitalism but then there is this other layer of internalized ableism that we all have and that impacts us. And so, I would love for you both to kind of share your thoughts on that and what the relationships are between capitalism and ableism. Well, we should define

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those terms also probably for everybody listening just to make sure we all know what we're talking about and how those kind of impact these experiences.

Tina: I would say that almost the ideology of ableism is the bedrock of capitalism. Because obviously if you think that all is based around how much you produce, all is based around how long you can work for, how fast you can work and what output you can create. And obviously if you have a disability you cannot fulfil that expectation. And so, ableism I would say is almost, well, I don't know if you can say, it's almost like a product of capitalism.

Kara: Hold on, can we pause? Can you define ableism for everybody listening in case they aren't exactly – they've probably heard the word but maybe aren't entirely sure what that means or what it looks like.

Tina: The pressure of a definition. In a nutshell the term ableism refers to bias, prejudice and discrimination against disabled people. Or if you prefer people first language you would say people with disabilities. The discrimination is based on the belief that there is actually a correct way for bodies and minds to function. And that anyone who deviates from that is inferior and less valuable. In relation to what we're discussing today, the correct way for bodies and minds to function would be to be at most productive.

Now, to define ableism properly we also need to define disability. And that is just because there are different interpretations around about what disability actually is. Broadly speaking there are two models of disability, the medical model and the social model. I prefer the latter and I'll explain you. The medical model of disability says people are disabled by their impairments or differences. An impairment would be being blind, experiencing bipolar, having MS or a say learning difficulty.

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The social model says that people are disabled by barriers in society that exclude them and discriminate against them and not by their impairment or difference. To be clear, when I say barriers I do mean physical, not having accessible toilets but also mean barriers caused by people's attitudes to difference like assuming disabled people can't do certain things. Let me give you an example.

Say you're a disabled who can't use stairs and you want to go to a restaurant. When you get there they have steps at the entrance. The social model recognizes that this is a problem with the building and not you as a person and would suggest adding a ramp to the entrance to resolve the issue. The medical model will try to get you walking. Basically, the social model states that disability is caused by the way society is run and organized. So, people with impairments or difficulties are disabled by society.

So, disability is therefore a social construct. Now, this is a bit controversial but I'm going to say it anyway. You do not have to identify as disabled to experience ableism. Disabled people have expressed that the negative effects of ableism have been socially and psychologically damaging to them in a myriad of ways. What is less known however is how ableist attitudes affect a lot of people that may not identify as disabled.

Kara: Can we just pause there for a second? Because I think even just thinking about, this is such a good opportunity to think about the ways in which whoever is a dominant group in society sets the standard implicitly for what's considered 'normal'. So, we use, for people who haven't paused to think a lot about ableism or internalized ableism or structural ableism, why do we consider whatever? We have some general sense. It's not even like it's defined anywhere of what being supposedly 'able bodied' means. But where does that even come from?

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How is it communicated to us? We just absorb this through socialization. I guess really what I want to say is it's primarily, especially with patriarchy, it's not even just based on being 'able bodied', it's also based on men and what is able bodied for a man. I mean men have 24 hour hormonal cycles, and we have a 24 hour workday or 24 hour day based culture. So, people who have more of a female reproductive system or hormones are on a different hormonal cycle. Even just what we think about as being 'able bodied', it's even more kind of specialized.

It's really what is some kind of generic supposed standard or norm that even that I think is male influenced based on men, based on probably white men, based on patriarchy.

Tina: Yeah. And I would say you always think it only affects disabled people but I think it affects everybody, because everybody lives on a spectrum. It's not like everybody has the same mental capacity, has the same mind, has the same body. So, I would always define it as a really broad term. And I guess it's almost, yeah, there's a sort of stigma, you think about ableism, or internalized ableism, that's nothing to do with me.

But internalized ableism just means it's sort of you having internalized discriminatory ideas about, you know, I was saying this when I was speaking in the Slack, they do not fit with this sort of muscly, power, cis-real, white dude.

Kara: Yeah. And I mean I love that. I think it's so important, it's not a binary, it's a spectrum. It's a spectrum all along, whether or not you identify or experience impairments or experience social disability because of social structures or whatever. Everybody is somewhere on the spectrum. And also, everybody experiences natural changes in their body and their ability over their life based on just being sick, getting pregnant, being whatever

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else, living in an environment that has mold in it when you didn't before or whatever.

Your body is going to fluctuate. Your kind of physical resources are going to fluctuate. How kind of hostile it feels in society's ableist structures are, are going to impact you more or less depending on where you are in your life. And then over time as we age most people experience a change in their physical abilities. And that's coming no matter what. So, all of this impacts all of us regardless of where we maybe start supposedly on some kind of spectrum.

Tina: I would also say it's almost an organic human experience that unless you die a sudden premature death, we will experience it at some point.

Kara: Right. Unless you're an Olympic snowboarder who happens to die at 21, you will probably experience some change or difference in your physical abilities as your life goes on. Do you have anything you want to add to this part, Rachèle?

Rachèle: Yeah. I just wanted to add that when we were talking about doing this together I said to Tina, "I don't think I have things to say about this. Who am I to comment?" And she said, "Well, it's even things like I'm allergic to dairy, death allergic." She said to me, "Even not wanting to speak out at restaurants." That that is something that I feel that I'm being awkward or a pain. That that is to the other people around me, "Oh, no, here she is moaning about things." And I didn't even realize that was an aspect of this.

And even thinking also separately on the corporate world, women when you talk about the menstrual cycle and our emotions do change. And tears, having been in that world are shunned upon. Oh, it's the woman, she's being so emotional, what are you doing? Whereas if a man is to show

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anger, that's allowed. It's like well, he's just being, like Tina's, the muscular, showing his emotion, being powerful.

Kara: He's a strong leader, yeah.

Rachèle: Yeah, right. So, there's also that emotional side of, I think.

Kara: It's not even seen as – one of my favorite tweets ever and by favorite I mean just horrifyingly accurate was basically the biggest con men have ever pulled is rebranding anger as not an emotion. That when men get angry that's like somehow they're not being emotional. But when women have any emotion they are being emotional. So, let's talk a little bit about how we can use thought work. So, here's all the problem, we've all internalized sort of what I would call toxic capitalism.

I mean those of you who heard the episode with Trudi Lebron, it's useful to differentiate between toxic capitalism and what she calls just commerce which is a more equity based way of exchanging goods and services for value. And I think just commerce would not have to be ableistic. It's ableism in a different word form. It would not have to be discriminatory based on ableism, let's say it that way. Whereas I think toxic capitalism in its current form is as Tina said, inherently confused with ableism, that's how we can say it because ableistic doesn't sound like the right word.

Tina: Ableist.

Kara: Ableist, there we go, where was I getting the "ic" from? I was having a lot of trouble with that.

Tina: I think I was too far away from my microphone the whole time.

Kara: Sometimes you get a word wrong and you're just like...

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Tina: When you were looking for it, I was going, ableist.

Kara: Ableist, there we go. Ableist, I don't know where that was coming from. I have said that word 10 million times. But it's definitely inherent in that kind of toxic capitalist obsession with productivity. So given yes, we all want to make social change but also now we live in this world right now, what can we do with our brains which is the theme of this podcast. I'd love to hear from both of you. We're going to have Rachèle go first this time because Tina's always going first.

So, talk a little bit about how you think we can use thought work to deal with this. To not deny what the structural problems are but to kind of create more resilience.

Rachèle: Yeah. But for me at the most basic sense is to first have the awareness. There's so many things going around in our brains that we don't even realize. And I think when we talk to non-coaches we realize that people just assume this is just the way it is. So, I always teach my clients first of all to just get in the habit of getting their thoughts down on paper because there's so many niggly little things that you're like, I didn't even realize how much I was pushing myself today, or hating on myself, or shoulding on myself.

And as a British thing as well, we're often keeping a stiff upper lip. We don't want to discuss it with friends. We don't want to be seen to be failing or not being productive. So having what's actually going on in your brain, the self-talk you're having, getting it out on the paper is really, really helpful to get that awareness. And then once you've got the awareness, you taught us, which I teach everybody is just looking at those thoughts and seeing if there's a way of changing them slightly. So, we call it the thought ladder which you've probably heard Kara mention before.

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But it's looking at those and saying, questioning those thoughts, is it really that you should be doing something? Or could it be that, is it possible that I don't need to do that today? Is it possible that I could do something else? And just giving yourself the opportunity to be aware and look at is it true or not? And how could I maybe change that thought to serve me to be a bit kinder? We're so harsh on ourselves as women. And just having that kindness and having that care for ourselves a little bit, even if it's just 10 minutes a day in the morning is really going to be helpful.

Kara: Yeah, I definitely agree. It all has to start with that awareness. What do you think, Tina? How do you use thought work on kind of this internalized ableism productivity stew?

Tina: I also start with the awareness piece. I think it's so important to really actually educate yourself of where all this is coming from. So, it's not just you thinking all these things, I think just knowledge is a piece. So, awareness and the awareness, I put knowledge. And then noticing it. So just wandering throughout your day and just notice this stuff coming up with compassion. Because it can happen then you'll kind of go, "Oh, no, it's all in my brain." And you beat yourself up. And you try and reject it and push it all down. That's why we're saying notice it with compassion.

And then next step I teach is naming it out loud which is a bit weird. You can do this sort of out loud in your head. And the way it goes is you just narrate your own life a little bit. And I always say, "Oh, here comes the bit where my brain regurgitates the thought that." Or you can create your own sentence. It's almost like you're narrating, you're noticing that you're kind of creating a bit of distance in your head.

And then the next one is just sit with cognitive dissonance. It's almost like this stuff that you've internalized and then how you actually want to think, both of these things happen in your brain, just sit with that for a bit. And

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then what Rachèle already said, kind of use your tools, do a model, sit with your model. And that will be an important part to process your feelings before you create an intentional model and then practicing new thoughts. Almost kind of going, okay, now, I know where this is all coming from and now what.

Kara: So, I love that and I think one of the things that's coming to mind as you're speaking, so in some ways it's like thought work often feels very zoomed in. It's like what is the specific thought in your brain and then understanding if structural oppression feels very zoomed out. It's like what is the big picture society system in the world. But I think one of the places it's really easy to see how they intersect is seeing the programming in your brain as a program you were taught, a thought your brain learned to believe was true.

And then looking at the ways in which your brain will always find evidence to prove that true. So, in this instance an example would be like, you start out thinking, well, I don't get enough done. That's why I have these thoughts. I'm behind. I'm not getting enough done. I'm not productive enough. I didn't have a product day, whatever, whatever. We've all heard this a million times in our own head and from everybody around us. And everybody says it like it's a true thing. It's clear that the day truly wasn't productive and that that's bad.

If you take a step back and you think, okay, so what happened when I was socializing growing up is that I absorbed all this internalized ableism and capitalism. Which means that my brain now runs the program called, you're probably not doing enough. That's the program in my brain and my brain wakes up every morning and was like press play, on you're probably not doing enough. And if we don't know about thought work and socialization, we're like, "Yeah, that's true, let me try to take a bunch of actions to try to satisfy that program."

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If I take enough actions my brain will not run the program. But in fact, once you learn that it's truly just socialization and a program your brain is running, I think that's when you can start to think about the fact that even when you've had a really productive day, the next day your brain says it again. And sometimes your brain tells you that you don't have enough time to do things when you only have two things to do. But you can start to see how what is actually happening in the world does not really impact whether your brain decides to say this or not.

Because the script is in there, or the program is in your brain, your brain is going to play that program regardless. So, if you feel overwhelmed you may think, well, if I just took half the things off my plate then my brain wouldn't play the, I'm overwhelmed. And if you're thinking you're not productive enough, you think, well, if I just double what's on my plate, my brain wouldn't play the I'm not productive enough program.

These things are so deeply connected because in a very weird way I think if you believe you need to constantly be productive then you are constantly taking actions to make yourself overwhelmed because you don't believe that there should be any space basically. You don't believe that there should be any rest or any relaxation. And so, it seems counterintuitive, when you're overwhelmed what you think is yeah, of course I want to do less. I'd like to have less things to do. I would feel so great.

But subconsciously you are actually constantly creating more shit for yourself to do because if you weren't overwhelmed then you wouldn't think you were being productive. They go hand in hand. You actually are very afraid to not be busy because then you'd have to think that you aren't productive and aren't valuable. I don't know if that makes sense because I'm just saying it as I talk it out but it's like two sides of the same coin.

Rachèle: It's like your worth is based on how overwhelmed you are.

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Kara: Right. You don't think that but it's true because your worth is based on how productive you feel. And so, you want to always have the chance to be more productive to prove your worth. So, you're going to keep adding shit to your plate so that you can keep trying to make that happen. You're not going to take stuff off your plate even if you could. You think you would intellectually but subconsciously your brain is running the program to keep adding shit.

Because if your plate was actually half full you think you'd feel peaceful and not overwhelmed. But actually, your brain is terrified of that because then you would think that you're not worthy or not good enough because you're not doing enough. So, it's like terrible codependency between being overwhelmed and thinking you have to be productive all the time.

Rachèle: Like busy syndrome, we're so busy which means I must be very important.

Kara: Right. I think I don't want to be but I keep making myself busy because my ego is tied up in it, yeah. What were you going to say, Tina?

Tina: I was just going to say, as you were talking as thought practitioners that this can seep into your thought work as well. So that you beat yourself up about not having done your thought work today. And that you include this into your belief system of being productive and it's called thought work, isn't it? The kind of this bettering yourself. And it can happen also with rest. Whenever I see these posts about rest is productive, it just drives me up the wall.

Kara: Well, you're like, that's not the point of rest.

Tina: Exactly. And also, what I also wanted to say, when you start doing this work and you maybe stumbled across this right now, once you start

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putting on the brakes, you think that, oh, no, I'm going to rest. And I'm going to get rid of all this productivity thinking. It's actually going to feel really shit because I've gone through, when we come back to personal lived experience. When I kind of stopped or was forced to stop it was actually really horrible.

Kara: That's why we don't rest because we don't want to experience what it's going to feel like.

Tina: Yeah, exactly.

Kara: Totally, so good. So those of you listening to this and are like, "Oh my God, this describes me, I need help with this." I want you to go to unfuckyourbrain.com/breakthrough, teaching the Burnout Breakthrough starting June 6th. And we are going to solve this problem. You're going to learn exactly what is creating your burnout. And you're going to learn how to heal what's already happened, but most importantly, stop, get out of the cycle so you are not continually creating more burnout for yourselves.

So, unfuckyourbrain.com/breakthrough. Or you can text your email to +1-347-997-1784 and the code word is breakthrough. And I would love for you guys to also tell everybody where they can find you if they want to learn more about your work.

Tina: So, I have no website. I only have an Instagram. There you go, that's where you'll find me.

Kara: How modern of you, no website at all.

Tina: In one place. And it's [@tina.marie.koch](https://www.instagram.com/tina.marie.koch).

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Kara: Do you want to spell that in case people based on pronunciation or aren't exactly sure.

Tina: I can't spell, I'm German, you're putting me on the spot there, I'll try. So, at T-I-N-A-M-A-R-I-E-K-O-C-H.

Kara: There we go. We'll put it in the show notes also.

Rachèle: Mine is no better. I'm just telling you that now.

Kara: Alright, spell yours, let's go, what's happening? You've got to get in the Business Mastermind so we can fix this, what's happening, Rachèle?

Rachèle: Yeah, I'm the one who phonetically spells my name on Zoom so that people normally can know how to say it. So, mine is, I have a website, Rachèlesummers.com. So, it's R-A-C-H-E-L-E summers.com. And I have an Instagram which is Rachèlehannahsummers and that's it because somebody stole Rachèle Summers before me.

Kara: Oh, no. [inaudible] vigilante, get that shit back. Alright my friends, so check out these brilliant coaches. And if you want to work on your burnout in the short term which you all should because the world isn't getting less crazy. unfuckyourbrain.com/breakthrough, we are starting June 6th. Alright you all, thanks for coming on and sharing your wisdom and expertise with the chickens and with me.

Rachèle: Thank you for having us.

Tina: Thank you for having us.

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