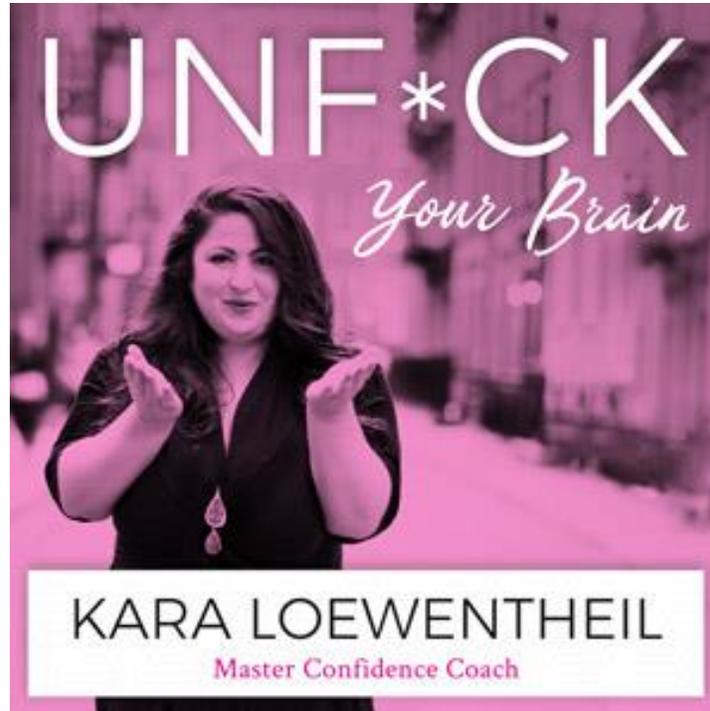


UFYB 247: The Inherent Brain Error Everyone Makes



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.

Hello my chickens. How are you? I am hot. I don't mean aesthetically although also that way. It's just really full on New York summer now and it is hot. And I have lots of feelings about summer. So, I think I am consistent about summer because I'm just not a big fan of it overall. I mean I like it being late at night, light late at night. There we go, that's a tongue twister. But other than that, I could do without the heat, the humidity, the smell, the sweating, all of it, just not a big fan.

But I see a lot of people around me who love parts of summer. They love that it's hot. I had an ex who loved being hot and I was so mystified. They love the long days, they love the heat but then they don't like the mosquitos and they don't like the way the garbage smells in New York in summer. Or they love the long nights but they don't like the heat or they whatever it is.

And this is sort of a superficial example of something that I want to talk about on a really deep level with you all and it's what I call the internal contradiction error. And this is a name I made up. And you know what? It's not that snappy. I could have done a better job but I'm really supposed to be on vacation right now so my brain is pretty tired. But here's what I mean by the internal contradiction error. And I have had this come up most recently in coaching around business.

And so, I'm going to talk about this in the context of entrepreneurship but whoever you are, a 100% I guarantee you are doing this in some area of your life. And so just listen and apply it to wherever you can see you're doing this. So, the internal contradiction error is when we want to do a thing or be a kind of person but we want the experience to be a way that is

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completely contradictory to the thing that we want to do or the person we want to be.

So, the way I see this coming up in entrepreneurship all the time is people decide that they want to be entrepreneurs. They want to start their own business. Entrepreneurship is inherently by its very nature a risky unpredictable experience. It is inherently and by its nature an experience that requires failing a lot, trying things that don't work, being rejected, having inconsistent results sometimes and going through the ups and downs of figuring every single fucking thing out yourself even if you hire a business coach, even if you hire whoever, even if you have an MBA.

Being an entrepreneur is basically being a real time problem solver with your business on the line all the time. Now, obviously as your business grows, it gets established, you have more of a kind of safety net within the business. The business is kind of robust enough that you can have a failure, it's not a big deal. You try a bunch of things, half of them don't work. You sort of have an infrastructure that can take a beating a little bit. It for sure is not always as crazy of a rollercoaster as it is in the very beginning. But it is inherently like that. That's what being an entrepreneur is.

It is not inherently a stable position where someone else can train you how to do the job exactly right and you will get feedback, and reviews, and a consistent salary, and 401(k), and whatever. As an entrepreneur you've got to create all that shit for yourself. You've got to teach yourself how to do the job while you're on the job. And again, I always work with business coaches. I offer business coaching in my Feminist Business Mastermind.

Business coaching is amazing but it's coaching your brain where it's getting in your own way. No matter who you are, no matter what program you enroll in, you're going to have to figure out shit for your own business. And how it works, and how to talk about it, and how to sell it, and how to best teach your people, and how to reach them, and how to change them, and

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all of that. So, entrepreneurship is inherently risky. That is the tradeoff. You don't have to go to an office where you work for someone else nine to five, or eight to eight, or whatever it is.

You don't have to agree with somebody else about what your salary can be. You don't have to do what other people say. Those are the benefits. But the tradeoff is it's inherently risky, and unpredictable, and you don't know how to do it. And yet I see so many entrepreneurs have what I call this entrepreneurial delusion which is this idea that being an entrepreneur should feel as stable, and predictable, and safe as having a desk job, as working for someone else. That's the internal contradiction error.

It is this delusion that this thing that you want to do or this person you want to be should not involve any of the scary or difficult aspects of it, and should in fact feel as safe and stable, and predictable as the other thing. So, I see this for instance in people who are non-monogamous where they want it to be non-monogamous without having to feel jealousy, insecurity, conflicts over time management, the sort of instability of learning how to.

I mean I want to be clear how I say this because non-monogamous relationships are not inherently unstable any more so than monogamous relationships in the sense of people can be committed to each other whether they're monogamous or not. But non-monogamous relationships don't rely on the institution of and the sort of almost patch band-aid of monogamy to provide a false sense of security and institutional security.

So non-monogamous relationships inherently have more people involved, whether there's more than two people in a given relationship or just because people in the relationship have other relationships. There's more people involved. There's more time commitments. There's more things to prioritize. Things are inherently more complicated, maybe it's a better word to use.

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So, people want to have a non-monogamous relationship without any of the complications of non-monogamy. And when they experience them, when they feel jealous, when they feel insecure, when they have to wrestle with what it means to love someone and how to know that you're loved without those things you've been socialized to be taught. You need to show you're loved. They think something's gone wrong. And the same thing with the entrepreneurial delusion.

Entrepreneurs experience challenge, risk, failure, things not working, business dipping after it was great and then it goes down the next year or whatever else. And then they think something has gone wrong. They think they're supposed to know exactly what to do and that everything is supposed to just be a clear and smooth progression, always growing bigger and bigger consistently with no failure, with no uncertainty, with no risk, no insecurity. And that's just an internal inherent contradiction.

You cannot have that. That's not what the thing does. It's like saying, "I want to take the train but I want it to be as fast as an airplane. I want the train because I like to be able to get on and off and I like to be able to see outside the window. And I don't want to be in the air. And I don't want to go through the airport. But I want to go at the speed of a flight." It's inherently contradictory. You can't have that. Now, maybe someday someone's going to invent that and that's fine.

But the point is that when we decide that we want to experience something, we want to be an entrepreneur. We want to be non-monogamous. We want to be whatever, whoever it is we want to be, everything we want to do. And yet we are so resistant to the essential inherent nature of that experience. That creates so much emotional drama and so much suffering for us. And the worst part is we completely magnify it and make it so much worse for ourselves.

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If you understood that being an entrepreneur is inherently risky, and confusing, and not as stable as working for a multinational corporation, maybe. Obviously there's multinational corporations that also fail and then you lose your job. So, some of this stuff is illusion but if you want to have this experience of building your own business, of getting to do exactly what you want to do in the world.

It's sort of like the more you want to customize your life the more you are going to experience challenge, and some struggle, and trying different things and some of them not working and more instability as you try to figure it out. That's just the tradeoff. That is the cost of doing business. If you want a safe, secure paycheck with no risk and no variation, don't become an entrepreneur especially not in the beginning. You can have that down the line sometimes.

If you want to never have to confront questions around sexual and romantic monogamy, what that brings up for you, don't become non-monogamous. And I can give you 10 million other examples. And some of you listening are going to have examples that I would never even think of because they're not my life experiences.

But whatever your life is like, I want you to think about the places in your life, whether it's your job, whether it's your family, whether it's your personal relationships, whether it's just the kind of person you want to become. Where you want all the good parts of it but you don't want any of the more challenging parts. And to compound that and make it worse when the inherent and natural challenging parts come up you react to them like it means something has gone wrong.

And then often because women are socialized to always blame themselves for anything, then we blame ourselves. So, this is something I work on so much in the Feminist Business Mastermind is my clients who have businesses that are working or will work if they keep going, freaking out

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about what are natural variations in business because entrepreneurship is inherently risky and uneven especially at the beginning.

But then when that happens they make it mean there's something wrong with them. So as opposed, if they just thought to themselves, oh, right, this is the cost of doing business, this is the tradeoff. I wanted to build my own vision, work for myself, create my perfect job for myself. And yeah, the cost of that is nobody else gives me the plan for what to do and nobody else guarantees my salary, and my retirement benefits, and my healthcare. And nobody else has the training program so I know exactly how to do every part of my role.

This is the tradeoff, this is normal and natural, it wouldn't be such a big deal to be able to keep going. And that's what they are learning. That's what we work on. But what I see so often is that in whatever area this is coming up for people they want the thing they want without any of the inherent challenges and complications of it.

And then when they experience those, rather than recognize that those are normal, and natural, and part of that process, they make it mean that something has gone wrong. So, they become reactive to it, they become resistant to it, they make it mean something about their own capacity and capability.

Some of my students in the Feminist Business Mastermind are making hundreds of thousands of dollars a year. And telling themselves that they are bad at business just because they are experiencing some normal variation in business and in entrepreneurship that is just inherent to the experience. But they compound it, they make it mean there's something wrong with them and then of course that starts to fuck with their mind, it fucks with their decisions, it fucks with their self-concept as a businessperson, as an entrepreneur.

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It makes them think they don't know how to do it. They're doing it wrong. And then they compound their own problem. Same thing with let's say non-monogamy, the other example I've been using, jealousy is normal, possessiveness is normal. It's normal for these emotions to come up when you are non-monogamous. And you can either think, right, this is the cost of doing business. I want this level of freedom to love and be loved by multiple people. I want my partner to have that level of freedom.

Probably sometimes shit's going to get messy. That's okay, I'm up for that. I understand that's inherent to this thing I want. That's a very different experience than having it come up and starting to freak out and believing that you should never have to feel those things. And if it does that means your partner's done something wrong probably and you need to control them better, which is antithetical to the whole process. Or there's something wrong with you, and you're broken, and you'll never be able to feel better about this.

And then you make the problem so much worse for yourself, you create so much more suffering for yourself. So, I want you to think about where in your life you are making this internal consistency error, this internal contradiction error.

Where are you wanting or believing that something that you want should not require experiencing the challenges that are inherent to that role or experience? Whether that's as an entrepreneur, or someone non-monogamous, or whether that's us, the CEO of a Fortune 500 company and a monogamous mother of seven, or whatever, whatever your identity is, whatever your experience is. Where are you making this error?

Where are you thinking that any experience, or identity, or role should be, just the easy parts of it you like and not the parts that are inherent to that experience that are challenging? And then where are you for extra credit making those normal inherent challenges mean something about yourself

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and your own capacity to do that thing, have that role, have that experience?

It's normal to have those variations or those challenges but you don't have to make it mean anything about your own capability. You don't have to make it mean that you're doing it wrong, that there's something wrong with you. That's what really gets in your way in the end.

Alright my chickens, go hunt down some internal inherent contradictions whether it's entrepreneurial delusion, non-monogamy delusion, or your own personal version of this delusion. You will be shocked to see what a difference it makes to just understand and acknowledge that this experience, or role, or life, or person you want to be or whatever it is. That the challenges it presents are inherent to the experience and are normal and don't mean that anything has gone wrong. I'll talk to you next week.

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