

**Bonus: Perfectionism in Coaching
& Trusting Your Own Experience:
A Conversation with Dr. Katrina Ubell**



Full Episode Transcript

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Kara Loewentheil

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Bonus: Perfectionism in Coaching & Trusting Your Own Experience: A Conversation with Dr. Katrina Ubell

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. We are diving into perfectionist brain today. And we are diving into the high achieving brain today. And we are having a really important conversation about how to adapt and understand coaching tools for your specific brain especially if you are someone who has accomplished things in your life before. And has already gone to college, maybe gone to graduate school, has gotten challenging jobs, has gotten promotions, has created big results in your life already.

Now, listening to this you may be thinking, yeah, but, sure I did those things but here's why they don't count, we're talking to you ma'am, or sir, or a person of any pronoun that you use, if that's how you're thinking about this. But before we dig into the conversation that I'm having with my friend and physician coach, Katrina. I want to make sure that if you are listening to this and you are a coach make sure that you are thinking about how this topic shows up in your coaching.

And making sure that you feel like you know how to coach people who may not really be the right candidates for some of the traditional coaching tools that we are taught. It's super important to understand your niche and your clients, and to understand whether they for instance need to be motivated, to set goals and learn how to go after them or if they need to learn how to chill out and slow down and actually take breaks. Those are very different clients with very different problems.

And a lot of coaching tools are really focused on people who maybe need more help setting and achieving goals, taking responsibility for their lives.

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And they are not really as suitable for people who already take too much responsibility for their lives and everyone else. So, it's important to know who your clients are, who your niche is, who you are coaching.

So, if that is you and as you're listening to this episode you are thinking, oh yeah, I think my clients are in this category or some of my clients are in this category. And I think maybe I've been teaching them tools that don't really wrap on to what they need. I want you to make sure that you are on the waitlist for the Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching. We are opening applications very, very soon, in a matter of days if you're listening to this when it comes out.

And this is something that we work on in depth in the Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching is how coaching tools and concepts need to be adapted for people who have different kinds of brains, different kinds of experiences, and different needs. Coaching is not one size fits all. You may hear that when you first get coach certified. But the truth is we have all had different lived experiences and we have different lives and brains and we get different messages from society.

So, if it were a one size fits all it'd be an easy job, but it's not. So, make sure you are on that list. You can text your email to +1347 997 1784. That's +1347 997 1784, the codeword is ACFC, just those initials, ACFC. Or go to unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc. And you will be among the first to know. Alright, let's get into it with Katrina.

Kara: Hello, my chickens, I have a bonus podcast episode for you this week. It is just a lucky double week. And I'm really excited for this conversation not only because my favorite people to have on my podcast

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are my friends. But also, because I think that so many of those of you who listened to my podcast are maybe perfectionist who didn't know you were perfectionist are maybe a little self-critical, maybe a little high achieving. There's a reason that the episode on perfectionist fantasy is the most downloaded one of all time.

And so today I'm going to be talking with my friend, Katrina Ubell, Dr. Ubell for those of you who don't know her who is a weight loss coach for physicians. But in the context of this podcast more importantly somebody who also was herself and coaches very type A high achieving, driven, mostly women or all women. And we're going to be talking about how you sometimes need to adjust coaching tools that you might learn in various places to account for this particular kind of personality.

No system is the same, not every person's the same, not every tool works the same. Katrina, can you introduce yourself and maybe as part of that kind of tell us how you got into coaching and where you started and how you got to where you are now.

Katrina: Yeah, absolutely. So, first of all thanks for having me. I'm excited to be here. It's so good to talk to you. Yeah, so I mean I kind of did the classic path of the high achiever, excellent student, did all the extracurriculars back in the days when you were expected to be a well-rounded student, can you remember that? To get into college you needed to be well rounded, having a soon to be college aged kid I've found out that's not the thing anymore.

Kara: What is the thing now, to be a hyper specific expert?

Katrina: Well, now they want you to go deeper dive on certain things that you're really passionate about. And ideally that also then relates to

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whatever it is you want to study. If the moons align then those two things would be that. But this whole idea that you needed to play a sport and be on the debate team, and be also doing community service, and having a job. And all the things that apparently isn't the thing they're looking for anymore. So, I did all of those things and got into my dream college.

Actually, I went to college to be an engineer and I actually got an engineering degree. But it was halfway through that that I realized actually I think I might want to be a doctor instead. I actually had not – I felt like everybody went to college thinking they were pre-med. I was like, “No, I don't want to do that.” But then it was through some experiences I had in college that I was like, “Wait, I think maybe I do want to do that.” And so, talk about the higher achiever.

So, there were a couple of semesters in college where I took 24 or 25 credits. Because I figured out that to go to med school you needed all these prerequisites that had not been prerequisites for my major. So, in order for me to apply to college and not have to take an extra year because why would a high achiever perfectionist take an extra year? God forbid. So, I had to stack on all these extra classes to be able to get the basics – and not even the basics, well, some of it was basic sciences.

But also, I had to take an English class. Things that had not been required for my major but certain med schools require that. So, I just really set up this whole system for myself where it was basically if you just try hard enough, you can achieve whatever it is that you want. And so, my grades arguably were not really the super highest level to be able to get into med school, what they would expect. But I had also majored in a really, really hard major. And so, when the regular pre-med advisor was like, “Hey, you should probably take a year off. Just take some time off.”

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I was horrified and super offended so I went to the pre-med advisor of my major and he was like, “No, no, no, we can get you in.” And yeah, and I did get in. I got in a multiple places shockingly. So, I went to med school, became a pediatrician and then I was doing that for probably about eight or nine years before I first experienced coaching. I had heard, like so many people I had heard the term, life coach on Oprah. I think it was Martha Beck. I didn’t even know Martha Beck was even Martha Beck was back then.

But then there is this woman named Martha Beck who was on Oprah and would talk about life coaching. Didn’t really know what it was but what happened was I had actually been doing Pilates with a woman and then she moved away. And when she moved away she just mentioned that she thought she might become a life coach. So somehow I filed that into my memory. Then fast forward at least a year, I was just struggling with a family issue. And it was one of those things where it was the thing that had happened which by the way I literally don’t remember what it was.

But the thing seemed a very big deal in all caps, VERY BIG DEAL at the time. And so, I was really unable to let it go and I started thinking, maybe I’m actually the one who has the problem here. Because the other party is not bothered by this at all. They’re just living their great life and I’m over here completely stewing. And I just for some reason felt like, I was like, “I don’t think therapy is the thing.” I’d done therapy before.

And I didn’t have anything against it. I just was like, “I don’t think that’s really what I need.” But I know if I don’t do anything to help myself, I’m going to say some things that I’m going to regret. Something needs to happen here. And that’s when I remembered this friend with the life coaching thing. And I’m like, “Maybe I should reach out to her and see if

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she ever did that.” Maybe that would be something for this. And she had literally just gotten certified. It was one of those weird alignment things.

And so, she did two calls. Actually, she had left to live in the UK, then came back, had just moved back, had all these babies and children, and she was very busy. So, I did two sessions with her, learned the very, very basics. And it totally blew my mind, completely was just like, “What do you mean, my thoughts create my feelings, create my actions?” And I was just like, what? And it was amazing. I immediately was hooked. I was like, “I have to know more about this.”

And then it was really actually as I was approaching my 40th birthday when I was sort of doing a bit of a life re-evaluation, looking at various different things in my life, really looking at my job satisfaction. I’d been working as pediatrician for about 10 years at that point. I had three kids by that point. And another common theme for me was that I just kept gaining and losing weight, just kept gaining and losing, I mean at least 10 times of 40 up, 40 down, 40 up, 40 down.

And really just feeling like something just seems illogical here. That I keep repeating the same thing and I’m just not solving for this problem. Again, being a high achiever, I was just kind of like, “It just doesn’t seem logical that whatever Weightwatchers has to offer is the only thing there is.” And of course, I tried all sorts of other crazy things that were not helpful either. And so, I kind of had my eye on the life coaching thing and then realized, life coaching can help with weight too.

And I’m like, “Interesting.” And I have to say I was completely blocked in terms of any accessibility of my emotions. Not only am I a high achiever, both my parents are German from Germany. We don’t do emotions. This is not a thing. It’s just like pull yourself up by your bootstraps and just keep

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going. So, I really, really had so much to learn in terms of just actually becoming aware of what was happening for me. And realizing that I had just been using food as the way to shove that down and I had been doing that for a really long time.

And so that was sort of my entry point really into coaching. And then I was like, "Wait a minute. Actually, I never even wanted the business to be 100%." Honest, I really just wanted to learn more. I wanted to be able to teach my kids this stuff. I was like, "I wish I knew this when I was younger." And then I was kind of like, "You know what, I bet you there's other women doctors out there who also feel a lot of shame about being doctors who struggle with their weight when they're giving advice that they're not following and they don't know why."

Maybe there might be some doctors out there who want some help with this because it totally changed my life. And then that was the start of this business and the start of me going, "You know what? I think I don't want to actually doctor anymore, I think I want to help these amazing women who are such great caregivers to all of us but are really struggling on the inside themselves."

Kara: And I feel like that's so, whether it's about weight or anything else, and whether you're a doctor or not, that's such a common way that socialization sets women up which is to be taking care of everybody else and not taking care of themselves. That is what you hear especially, I mean I think it is changing but we're all still alive with previous socialization and were raised by mothers and grandmothers who really had the previous socialization.

Katrina: Totally. And even just the trauma that they went through and stuff. Now, in hindsight I would just look at what my mother, my own mother went

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through. Her mother died when she was eight and no one ever talked about anything. She never got, you know, how do you at eight years old get through that when no one's there to support you? You shove your emotions down. She didn't use food but we all have these coping mechanisms.

And to your point they're just passed on, passed on, passed on until it kind of hits some sort of breaking time for someone who goes, "Wait, hold on a second. I want to actually look into this further."

Kara: Yeah. And I think that socialization around helping, that the best thing you can say about a woman or mothers, that they were selfless.

Katrina: Exactly. If they say that at your funeral, you've made it.

Kara: Yeah, right. I mean there's that meme that goes around on the internet that I think is there for a reason, it's some old Tumblr post or something, it's about somebody going to a woman's funeral and [inaudible] or not, and everybody gets up and talks about everything she did for them. And at the end they're like I have no idea what this woman was like. I don't know what she liked to do, if she was funny if she was smart, if she quilted. I don't know anything about her.

All I know is that she gave everything she had to other people. And even if you're listening to this and you're like, "Wow, that's what I want." That's socialization. You don't go to men's funerals and hear that, that idea that you're the giving tree basically, that that's what women are supposed to be like.

Katrina: Yeah, so then you'll finally chop down at the end. You know what I mean? There's literally nothing left.

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Kara: Right. There's literally nothing left, they should stop reading that book to little girls at least.

Katrina: Right, I know.

Kara: So, when you found coaching tools, I'm curious what, and then I can also talk about mine as well, but what your experience was in terms of coming from this background where you certainly knew how to set and achieve goals. And a lot of coaching tools are sort of focused on, I'm trying not to ask the question in such a leading way. But I'd just be curious to hear kind of what your experience was. Did the kind of coaching tools feel – what felt relevant to you or what didn't, what felt helpful or what didn't? How did you experience that?

Katrina: Yeah. Well, I have to tell you, just to kind of even frame this a little bit more is that an issue that I've really worked on a ton even in just the last couple of years is this idea that someone else is the expert. They know better than I do how I should live my life. For sure I felt this way with weight because the messaging also is well, you're obviously the one who got you into this mess so you can't possibly be trusted to know what your body might need.

You're the enemy and so you have to enlist some expert outside of you to tell you when you should eat and what to eat and all this stuff.

Kara: Right. Even when it's nonsensical, the expert says eat a grapefruit and a tablespoon of vinegar a day. And you're like, "Well, that's the expert. So, I guess then that makes sense."

Katrina: Your body is literally screaming for food. You're like, "No, so and so said I can't eat this."

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Kara: This dude I heard on the radio, who I paid 29.99 to says the human body can live on grapefruit and vinegar alone. So, I guess that is plausible.

Katrina: That must be the way. So that was kind of where I was coming from. Also, when you're going through the schooling like I did, like you did, like other high achieving people, it's very much like there is this prescribed way. It's like you need to do this. In medicine there is these practice guidelines, best practices, the 'right way' or arguably the right way that's supported by evidence and research is to treat patients this way, or do things this way, or talk about things in this way in the office setting.

So, I think it just was really set up to find an expert, find someone who is further ahead than me and then just believe every single thing they say. And when I say one person, I mean there's lots of people. It can be an author, it could be anybody. And then just go all in on what they're saying because they clearly have the solution. I know nothing even though as you said, arguably, wait a minute, I have actually been very successful in my life on my own. So interesting.

So, I definitely found that so many things, there was many tools that were super helpful for me and then many tools that I actually have had to spend years sort of scrubbing from my brain, undoing.

Kara: Right, like deprogramming.

Katrina: Exactly. And so, in hindsight now what I was thinking about, so what would I tell someone instead? The thing that I realized that I struggled with was it's like when you're such a high achiever and then you're exposed to self-help type stuff. Just like with anything, where we're like, "I just need to achieve the next thing and then I'll finally let myself be

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satisfied, think I'm valuable, get to think positive thoughts about myself, whatever."

It's like here's this person talking about this one way to do something, maybe how to run your calendar, how to keep yourself on track with your calendar and achieve goals. So, I'd better do what they're saying even though I actually don't have a problem with that. And the system that I've been using myself works just fine.

Kara: Right. You're like it isn't broke, so I'm going to fix it anyway.

Katrina: Exactly. There is no problem. So, I think that the best thing for people like us to be thinking as we're being exposed to this and being exposed to what I teach and what you teach, and what other people teach and all the exposures. Is what is the problem that this tool solves for and do I actually have that problem or do I even want – maybe you do have a problem but do you even want to solve that problem right now? Is that even the thing that you want to focus on right now?

And allowing yourself to still be the expert. We're the experts in our bodies. We're the experts in our minds. We can empower ourselves to go, "Well, this is an interesting idea, maybe I want to play with it, maybe I don't. But I don't have to look at it like this is the end all, be all thing." If I don't do this thing or do it this certain right way then I'm wrong, something's wrong with me. And we start creating more problems for ourself, and more opportunities for self-loathing which of course never helps anything at all.

Kara: Yeah. I mean to me this is why being aware of the socialization in your relationship with yourself is so important because the truth is, anybody else would have looked at my life and been like, you don't have a problem achieving things. But I still thought, I mean you know I got questioned on it

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in our mastermind forever. I was like, “They just can’t tell, I actually am lazy.”

Katrina: Yeah, they don’t know that I’m lazy, I just hide it really well.

Kara: Yeah. They don’t know that I’m lazy I’m just able to bang it out at the last minute. They just don’t know. So, I didn’t even have the self-awareness, even if you had told me this, I would have been like, “No, I do have a problem with that.” Which is why for me I think so much of it is my philosophy is I would much rather you do nothing and be nice to yourself about it than do a bunch of shit and be mean to yourself about it.

That relationship with yourself is actually the core thing that we’re trying to work on because we’re not even, I think with gender socialization, with high achiever socialization, perfectionism, we’re not even reliable witnesses about whether we actually have problems. We just think we’re doing everything badly and can always be doing everything better.

Katrina: Totally. And that kind of lack of ever being satisfied, never ever thinking that good enough is good enough or what we have is good enough is part of the problem. That’s what has gotten us into this situation where we feel dissatisfied, where we feel like we’re underperforming or coming up short in some way even though all evidence on the outside is to the contrary. And it’s just another way that we can sort of beat ourselves up.

I’ve had many, many clients who are like, “Well, the way I got to be this high achieving doctor is by beating myself up. So, I’m really reluctant to give that up.” And what I always remind them is, you know, these are people that work with me. I’m like, “Well, okay, you’ve decided that speaking really harshly and negatively to yourself created the result of you performing better. But what you’re forgetting is that the only way that you

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could even tolerate being with yourself was by using food to numb out and possibly alcohol to just try to avoid that negativity.”

So, saying that that helped but then you needed this other crutch because it was so uncomfortable and so awful. Why are we fighting for this way of achieving things? It kind of doesn't make sense.

Kara: Yeah. My answer to that is always, “What if you have actually achieved everything you've achieved in spite of your self-talk or because of it?” Correlation is not causation, maybe you actually would have achieved even more without it. But I think that's also such a good point because basically what we're saying in that instance is, I have to achieve things to feel okay about myself but when I drive myself to achieve things I'm doing it by feeling shitty about myself, so I don't feel right. So, what is the point?

You're trying to achieve things to feel better about yourself but the method you're using makes you feel terrible about yourself so that's never going to produce feeling good about yourself. You can run that equation 10,000 times.

Katrina: I don't know about you, I mean I feel I am still working on this, in various degrees. I feel like this year has been a big one for me. And just really more deeply fully absorbing in the concept that if I don't like the day-to-day-of my life, of my work then that's on nobody but me. You know what I mean? No one's going to come and rescue me. There is no accomplishment that will feel so good that it will make up for feeling bad along the way. It really, really comes down to me saying, “You know what? I don't want to live my life this way.”

And it could just be, hey, my attitude sucks and I need to change that. And I need to remind myself how I want to approach these same things that I'm

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doing. Or it could be that I'm not doing them either the same way or in the same volume. Or I definitely have this, it's kind of like if I'm feeling off kilter, my first thing is I should just work more. Always overworking is the subconscious solution. And so, I think that when we identify that about ourselves, we just have to be aware, okay, that's me doing that again.

Now I'm working on the weekends, or now I'm staying up late working. Okay, I've got to dial that back again. If I can't get my work done during that time then I've got to really look at what I'm taking on and why. Really I think it was for so much of my life it was just get through this punishment because it'll be better on the other end. That's so much of med school, and our medical training and all that.

And even for people who have babies, I mean for me being pregnant was awful, just get through this nine months of horribleness so that you can have the reward of the baby at the other end. And then you have the baby and then you're like, "This kid won't latch, and they're up all night. And this is really hard so let me just get them till they sleep through the night." Okay, now they're sleeping through the night. Let me just get them till they can talk.

Kara: Yeah, we always think satisfaction and happiness is at the other end.

Katrina: At the other end.

Kara: And I do some work with Vicky Louise who's the time coach and I just felt so called out by one of her posts recently because even though I teach you can't hate dating and expect to find love. She had this post that was like, you can't work your way now to the 15 hour work week later. And I was like, "Fuck you." Absolutely I can. Because it just made me realized, and I don't overwork but definitely in my mind it was like yeah, 15 hours

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would be great but it's going to take more upfront to get to that place, that's such a common thing.

And we're socialized to think of that as a virtue. And it is such a balance. I see with coming into, now that I am spending more time with children and my partner has kids. And I'm more involved in that process. It's like balancing these lessons that you want to teach of yes, delayed gratification is important in some instances. It is important to learn how to do things for future benefit if you want to do anything other than lie around in the woods and eat berries which also sounds great but hard to do in a capitalist economy.

You're going to have to cultivate that and at the same time now instilling the sort of suffer now, be happy later which I also think of as this very kind of Christian concept of life on Earth is hard and terrible. But then there's heaven afterwards which I am Jewish, there is no heaven. So, I need to enjoy this now. I'm not going anywhere.

Katrina: Or it's just like this is hard but just don't wallow. There's no sense in complaining, so just pretend there's nothing hard about this. Which is essentially gaslighting yourself. Your lived experience is this but no it isn't, you're not allowed to feel like it's that way. And so, I mean I know you know this. How many coaches are sharing something that they're really struggling with and they're like, "I know it's just a thought." It's this immediate little dig on themselves of I shouldn't really be struggling with this.

Or you should be because you know what? You're a human being and you're allowed to.

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Kara: Right. All of human suffering response but so what? That's like saying, I ate something that made me sick, I know it's just food poisoning. Yeah, but just it feels bad while it's happening and it's not a problem.

Katrina: Right, exactly, it still sucks.

Kara: I think you talked about something earlier that I want to go back to which I think is the desire that we have for somebody to be the external authority. Because that's what gets us into this I think. When you get a cookbook, are you like, "I have to cook every single recipe in this from the front to the back?" Most of us, sometimes yes, I used to do this with the New Yorker. I've talked on the podcast before about how it was so freeing to me when I just gave – literally, this sounds hilarious now.

But gave myself permission to not read everything in the New Yorker. I just had this belief that to be a well-informed sophisticated person, I had to read all the articles even though every New Yorker has a 25 page article about like a terrible war somewhere.

Katrina: Right. So, you're like, "I have to do this even though I'll feel horrible afterwards."

Kara: I have to do this because why? I'm the foreign correspondent for the BCC on my off time. I am not in fact. I do not need to be an expert on the war in Libya. Yes, personally I have a value of being generally informed about the world.

Katrina: Yeah. That's very different than the 25 page [crosstalk].

Kara: I'm not that interested in geopolitics as it turns out and I don't want to read this article. But literally years I would read the whole thing cover to

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cover because I didn't think I was allowed to skip the parts I didn't want to. But at least with cookbooks I did know I could pick and choose. But we come to coaching, I think there are ways in which coaching occupies the space that used to be for some people would otherwise be occupied by religion, or a spiritual community, or a whatever, or a cult.

That's not because coaching is a cult, it's just because people just with therapy, or meditation, or yoga, anything, they just want a system to organize their mind and lives by. They want, what is it the EOE, the explanation of everything. We want the EOE that will explain everything for us and that will be our primary system to live by. So, then we find coaching and we're like, "This isn't a cookbook where I can pick and choose. I have to accept the entire thing."

And then that's the equivalent of being like, "I don't even like capers or salmon but I'm going to make and eat. And also, there is no salmon here and also this recipe is for a vitamin B deficiency and I don't have one. But I just have to do it anyway."

Katrina: Or the same thing, I mean I'm sure you see this, I for sure see this, the people who view food as a religion essentially, the healthy eating.

Kara: [Crosstalk] thing also to [crosstalk].

Katrina: I mean I did a five year dive into veganism and you would think that that's like, just don't eat animals. No, it's actually very involved and different factions within it. And they all think that if you don't do it their way then you're doing it wrong. And also, if you don't have every health issue you've ever experienced, and mental issue clear up immediately in eating that way then you're doing it wrong. It can't possibly be that maybe that way of eating is the right thing for you.

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Kara: Katrina, you're a doctor and you know that beans cure schizophrenia, we all know that. If you just eat enough combined lagunes.

Katrina: A complete protein as my mother used to say.

Kara: It's all taken care of, that's it.

Katrina: [Crosstalk] what does that mean? She goes, "I don't even know." She just knew it was something good.

Kara: So, I think one of the things that we're kind of drawing out here is honestly, whether you're a high achieving person or not but particularly if you know that you are the kind of – I sometimes think people who are less high achieving actually are better at this because they are – it's all those people who are a little more rebellious, or have wanted to make their own way, or didn't just fall into this system. Where some of us were like, "Oh, there's a system and I'll get an A at the end? I'm all in."

And that's how we move through life. I'm working on my book right now and I've been writing about this exact thing, that I found coaching. And it was like I forgot the feminism part of my brain for a minute where I was like, "Okay, this is the new world order. This is the new regime. This is how the world works." And then I eventually had to be like, "Something's missing. What was that thing I spent 25 years studying, and teaching, and writing about, is that maybe relevant to this?"

But that's what I think both of us are teaching in different ways. It is scary especially for people socialized as women to get in touch with their own discernment and authority. Because the stereotypes about women for thousands of years have been that we are irrational, overly emotional, not suitable for leadership, can't be trusted to make decisions, can't rely on

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ourselves. Need someone to tell us what to do. Our uterus are wandering all around our body making us crazy.

When there is a full moon we lose our minds. We are just socialized for so long to not believe that we can be the authority and we can be trusted with ourselves or anything else. Except the household and childrearing which apparently we're supposed to magically naturally know exactly how to do.

And so that to me feels like the biggest thread here is I mean I have an episode and I'm sure you talk about this too called "No gods, no guru." I don't know everything. Don't do everything I teach if it doesn't sound [crosstalk].

Katrina: I'm totally like, "Listen, you have to do is does this make sense for me?" How can I possibly know when someone else is supposed to eat? I don't know when you're hungry. Honestly if you think about it, it is really kind of egotistical. To be telling someone, "You need to fit all your food into this box. And that's all the food your body [crosstalk]."

Kara: Or this window.

Katrina: [Crosstalk].

Kara: There's this horrible podcast called the F-Factor about the F-Factor diet, have you ever listened to this?

Katrina: I haven't heard of the F-Factor diet.

Kara: Oh my God, it was based on a high fiber diet but I think that the person ended up having products. But they're telling these stories of people who are just eating insane amounts of fiber which for some people may

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work for them and for some people does not work for them. And is actually not a good idea. But that people just kept going and it's not because people are stupid. It's because we're so socialized to be divorced from our own bodies. And that might be food and eating or your emotions happen in your body too.

So, all of this is being divorced from your body whether or not you're thinking about your weight or eating, just being divorced from am I tired? Do I need to take a walk instead of get on this phone call? Do I feel overstimulated? Do I feel under-stimulated? Am I sad? Am I tired? All of that is in your body. And these people, they were having really intense physical discomfort and pain.

Katrina: I believe it, yeah.

Kara: And they just kept going because it was like this lady is the authority and she told me to eat all the fiber.

Katrina: Which is what you're saying about gods and gurus. It's like this religion makes me feel terrible. And I hate myself and I think I'm the worst person in the world but I'm going to stick with it.

Kara: Right. And of course, from my perspective and I think also even though you do coach weight loss, it's like your weight is not the most important thing in the world.

Katrina: No. And I was like, "Listen, I don't give a crap what you weigh, I mean sorry, but I really don't. I care that you stop hating yourself and that you stop obsessing about food all the time.

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Kara: Right. So, when you combine that revocation of our own authority and this sort of this is what matters is how you look, and the number on the scale or whatever. Of course, you get people who are completely divorced from their own experience and are willing to undergo a lot of emotional and physical suffering, because somebody else told them that that's okay, or not a big deal, or not really happening, or worth it.

Katrina: Right. And I have to say that I've had to work on this even in my business too for years of no, I am the expert in my business. There's no business coach who's going to come in and know better than me how to run this thing. And really deeply believing that. That was a huge part of this too. I don't need someone to come and rescue this business, or me, or save me, or anything like that. I actually have the knowledge. It's so interesting, I have told you before.

I have had times I'm out on a walk and I'm like, "Oh man, I'm struggling with this thing. And I should go to Kara and see if she'll coach me on this." And then I'm walking and like, "Well, what do you think Kara would say?" And then I hear your voice in my head and you're like, "Blah, blah, blah." And I'm like, "Well, but blah, blah, blah", back. And so basically you're in my head coaching me. And then by the time I get home I'm like, "I don't need to call Kara, I'm fine, I got coached."

Kara: I've been hearing you in my head being like, "Nobody's coming to rescue you." That has been the theme of my last six months. Totally. That's what it is. And we have to see, there's always a...

Katrina: We have it in us.

Kara: Yeah. And the appeal of not, not to get too grad school. But I feel like we need more [inaudible] in the coaching world. There's two sides to every

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power dynamic. So, when we make ourselves not the authority, you all, this bad shit can happen. But it also protects us from taking risks and putting ourselves on the line because we're just always like, "Oh no, I don't know, no me." I'm feeling like, do what somebody else says. But then of course if it doesn't work out then I can also blame that other person as opposed to taking that responsibility.

Yeah, it feels shitty when I think I need to be rescued but it also gives me this hope that a magical solution will come. It's two sides of that same belief. Versus if I'm like, "No, I've got to rescue myself." That's both scary and empowering.

Katrina: Right, exactly. I feel like it's just this ever evolving maturity. Whoever said that you become whatever, even if your prefrontal cortex is fully developed, executive functioning developed by age 25, I'm like, "No." And this is established as well, but not that often talked about. We continue to mature as we age. And I do really think it's like even just as a human but also as a businessowner, as a coach, as a partner, as a friend, all those things. You mature, you learn. I think ideally we take ownership and the responsibility for our own successes and our mistakes and failures.

And we learn from the mistakes and failures and from the successes, and we keep iterating and figuring out. And I just keep thinking at the end of this, whenever that comes, am I going to be more satisfied with the fact that I really relied on myself even though it was harder and was a lot more uncomfortable at times than going, "Well, someone else gave me orders and direction and I was just the foot soldier who carried it out." And it worked out sometimes and it didn't. I don't think that'll feel as satisfying.

Kara: No, totally. And there's nothing wrong with it, I mean both of us are people who have been experts or are experts and consult experts. We

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were just talking about, I'm like, I'm going to come out here to figure out the lighting in here. So, I don't want any of this to be taken as you decide for yourself if penicillin works.

Katrina: I always just look at it like I'm a pretty visual person. So, I think of it as creating a separation or a distance physically between me and the idea, or the book, or the person, or the whatever. And I think of it as that space is the filter. Before it was like I was glued to that person, whatever they said, right into my head, off I go to go do it. Now I'm like there's a bit of a filter where I can give myself a moment to just sit back for a second and go, "Okay, they said that, what do I think about that?"

Let me just take a minute to see what my own opinion is. Filter it through my own brain first and then decide how and if I want to take action.

Kara: Yeah. And if you're not doing that, also I think when you do that you have more of a chance of actually hearing what someone is saying because of course part of what happened is we encountered coaching tools that may not even have been taught in the way that we heard them, but because we were all not...

Katrina: But seriously, something must be wrong with me so I'm just looking for you to tell me, [crosstalk].

Kara: [Crosstalk], "Nothing's wrong with you and here's how to do x." And we just did not hear the nothing's wrong with you part. And we're like, "Great, here's how to do x and I'm finally good enough." I see my students doing that too, my whole podcast is me being like, "I don't give a shit about your calendar, I want you to like yourself." And then people are writing in being like, "I just can't do my calendar the way Kara says I have to do it." I'm like, "This is not, you can only hear what you're open to."

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And I mean I love that taking a step back and the thing I would add is sort of I also think it's – I totally will consult experts. But then if I try it and it isn't working for me. At that point am I like, "Great, that was a good experiment and this is not the right thing for me. I'm not getting the result I want." Or do I continue to be like, "No, my result and me must somehow be wrong."

Katrina: Yeah. Even think about it like that's an interesting idea instead of that's the way to do it.

Kara: Right. Let me try that. You are a source of one. And you have to decide how much risk you're going to take. I'm like, "Pretty sure penicillin does work." I'm not going to experiment and see if maybe it doesn't. That's not worth the risk, I'm just going to accept that authority for sure. There's other places where I might be like, "I'm going to try it and see what happens." And there's other places where I'm going to be like, "I feel comfortable just not even trying that." We all have to make those decisions.

But I think what we're talking about isn't like you're the expert of $N=1$, and so nobody else's expertise matters. It's like how do you use your own discernment, your own experimentation? Perfectionists, we all hate that because we're like, "But then how do I know if I got it right?" I need to know ahead of time. But the whole work is not having to know that you got it right, [crosstalk] that you used.

Katrina: Growing up in a system that told you, "Here's how you get the A." And then you're like, "Okay, cool. I'm going to do all those things." And then you get the A, really messes you up when you confront other things in life where it's not so clear. I mean that really hit home for me when I was struggling with some fertility issues after I'd had my first kid. They're like, "We don't know why you can't get pregnant anymore." And trying harder doesn't work with fertility.

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Kara: I've been having all the sex I can. I don't know what to tell you.

Katrina: That does not work. And I remember feeling so, but no, this is not how my life is. I just know if there's something I can rely on it's my ability to work hard, and to persevere until I get the thing that I want. Which you've got to, I guess, argue and say that I did do that. And in the case of fertility, did still get what I wanted. But there was no guarantee of that at all. And the whole, we don't know why that happened, or there's no clear pathway laid out. I was like, "What are you talking about? That is not how my life is."

I think that I even see it, my oldest son is a junior in high school, and he's looking at the rubric and the whole, whatever. And I'm constantly trying to filter into him, it's important but it's not that important. And you're doing this just to get the grade but that's not how life is always going to be. I feel like, it's like, yeah, duh, logically we know that. But wouldn't it have been nice to more deeply understand that? Even when I was talking about overworking, there's overworking. I overwork in the sense that I'm going about the rest of my life but I'm thinking about work.

My thoughts are consumed about work. I'm always in that place even if I'm not physically in my office or physically working. If someone could just be like, "You need to figure out a way to literally stop so that you can take a break from that." I think that would have really helped. But I mean let me just say, I don't think, I have had many clients say, "I'm just so mad that I didn't learn this stuff until now." And I'm like, "I never think about it that way." It came at the perfect time.

I probably wouldn't even have been open to it, I would have probably thought [crosstalk].

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Kara: And also, a newsflash, people had mentioned this shit to us before but we weren't ready to hear it.

Katrina: I think I've said the same thing. I'm like, "I probably did learn it and I was [crosstalk]."

Kara: I mean I wanted to be a psychology major in college. What are the odds I had never seen something that said that thoughts cause feelings. I'm sure that that information had been presented to me in a variety of ways but I was not ready to hear it until I was ready to hear it.

Katrina: 100%, yeah, I totally agree. I think really what it is, it's really we're just like, we just want, we want relief from our pain and we wish we could have had it sooner. And I'm like, "Or the pain got us to where we are now and now we're really motivated to get out of the pain." So that's a good thing too.

Kara: Well, I mean to me, I get that a lot in my coaching and I was just like, "I've got news for you, there's more pain coming." It's like this idea that if you had known this before you wouldn't have had a human experience for the last 10 years. No, it's still going to happen. That's going to happen going forward even though you do know about this, it's not an offering. So, tell people where they can find more about you?

Katrina: Yeah. Well, I just wrote a book that is coming out which you know a lot about. We've been sort of doing this somewhat simultaneously. So, the book is called *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time: Brain Based Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss.* I just want to mention that I feel like the title has multiple meanings. The secondary meaning to me is another way to lose weight for the last time is to stop trying to lose weight. Just give

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up on that, just stop with that part. But maybe we could create a little healthier relationship with food and ourselves.

And whatever happens with your body happens with your body because that's not really that important anyway. And what's most important is that you don't feel consumed like I used to be with constant thoughts about food and your weight, and hating yourself about all that stuff. So that book's available everywhere as well as audiobook. And then I have lots of free resources on my website katrinaubellmd.com.

Kara: Awesome. Go check it out you guys. Right, my friend, thanks for coming on.

Katrina: Thank you. Thanks so much, Kara.

Listen up, coaches. If you are a coach of any kind with any experience, certification, non-certification, multiple certifications, whatever, if you are a coach, if you're working as a coach. If you are coaching whether that's one client or 20 clients and you're listening to this podcast. It is super important that you make sure that you are on my email list that's only for coaches. I have an email list where I keep coaches updated on anything I'm doing that is for coaches and where all of my teaching, and information, and training, and all of that good stuff, that's for coaches goes.

So that this podcast doesn't just become just for coaches. So, if you are listening and you are a coach and you have ever wanted to, or think you may ever want to learn more about feminist coaching from the coach perspective of how to be a better feminist coach. How to bring intersectional feminist principles into your coaching. How to de-hiarchalize -

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de-hierarchy the coaching relationship. How to create more feminist coaching spaces.

How to coach in a way that is more transparent, and inclusive, and collaborative, all of the feminist coaching principles that I teach, you need to be on this specific email list. So here is how to get on it. Text your email address to +1347 997 1784, again that's +1347 997 1784, the codeword is just the initials, ACFC. ACFC. So that stands for the Advanced Certification in Feminist Coaching which is my advanced certification for coaches where I certify people to practice my feminist coaching principles and framework.

And of course, all of that information also goes to this email list. If you have been waiting for us to open up registration again, we only do it once a year. We're coming up on it soon. Applications will open to that list first. And applications are done on a rolling basis. So, the earlier you apply the better your chance of getting in. So, if you want to know when that's happening, anything related to feminist coaching goes to my feminist coaches list. So again, text your email to +1347 997 1784, use codeword ACFC, all initials. Or go to unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc. Okay, again, unfuckyourbrain.com/acfc.

Make sure you get on that list because that is where all the good coach stuff goes. I'll see you there.

If you're a coach or thinking about becoming a coach and listening to this podcast has made you realize that you don't want to be coaching inside that white box. That you want your coaching to be able to speak to the huge diversity of identities and lived experiences, and to be deepened and enriched by a historical, and cultural, and intellectual perspective so that you are truly coaching at the highest level. And you are truly helping to elevate the coaching industry, and elevate the coaching discourse until it can actually speak to everyone and change the world.

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

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