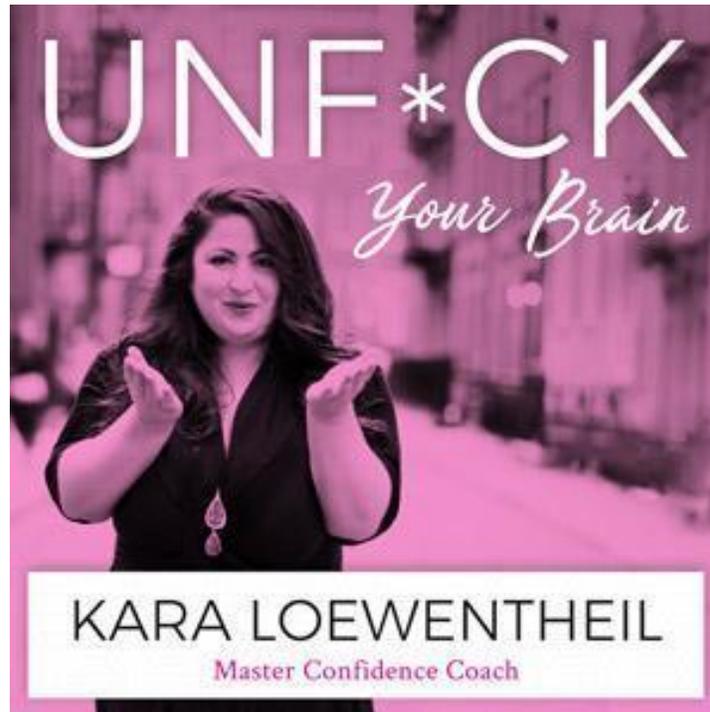


UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

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. So a few weeks ago you all heard me go through a style evolution process on air live with the fabulous Judith Gaton who is an amazing coach. She's a student of mine. She was one of my first one-on-one clients back in the day and then she became a coach. She may have already been a coach then. She was also a lawyer at the time. Now she is a coach full-time. She's a master certified coach. She went through the advanced certification in feminist coaching and she's a style coach for curvy women.

And so we did a whole podcast on kind of her area of expertise which is style and kind of evolving my style on air so if you haven't listened to that go back. But today I want to share a conversation we had on a totally different topic actually and this aired on Judith's podcast and I wanted to share the conversation with you because I think it was such an interesting conversation. We had a conversation about mentorship and kind of what mentorship means, ways of being a mentor, how to build a mentorship relationship.

But this is a term that it's interesting watching how the lingo of the coaching space changes. I've started to see this use of the term mentorship as a coaching offering or as a coaching relationship start to come into practice and to use. It's not that well defined and I think you could probably have a whole interesting conversation about the sort of ways that we maybe commodify certain kinds of personal relationships.

In any case, I don't have a fully worked out theory about what's happening in the coaching space with this word, it's not something that I use in my

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

offerings or my work but in terms of paid offerings. But certainly being a mentor, being a mentee I have been both of those roles in different areas of my professional life, different parts of my career. And I do think that those relationships can be very important depending on your kind of industry and your field and how it works.

So Judith and I had a really good conversation about how to be a good mentor, how to be a good mentee, how to find and build a mentoring relationship, how to think about a mentoring relationship from both sides. And so I think it's well worth a listen for all of you. So without further ado Judith and I are going to take it away. Have a beautiful week.

Judith: Hello everyone, welcome back to the *Style Masterclass* podcast. This week and in the coming weeks we're going to be doing a special series called The Mentors. And I'm going to be bringing on my mentors, colleagues, friends, teachers, people I admire, to talk to you all about mentorship, what it means, how to potentially obtain a mentor but also how to be a really good mentee and the value of mentorship in every woman's life.

So I have a very special first guest in this series, Kara Loewentheil who was my first one-on-one coach ever. There's a hilarious story about me ghosting her. I was not a very good mentee.

Kara: Actually you fired me, you didn't ghost me. You did send me an email asking for a refund so it wasn't really ghosting.

Judith: Yeah, it was more like, oh my God, it was like a freak out and then can I have my money back. And then tons of regret afterward. It's a great

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

fun story but I'll let you introduce yourself. Obviously you can take that away and then we'll start the conversation.

Kara: So I am Kara Loewentheil, I am the host of the *UnF*ck Your Brain* podcast. And I have known Judith from very early on in her life coaching journey. So I feel like I really I've seen you from being the first client to ever fire me and ask for a refund. So this is a special place in my heart because of that. All the way through you, coaching you in various containers and then the new advanced certification in feminist coaching that I offer that you came through.

And then even just seeing you at events and being like, "Hey, I'm just going to tell you what I think about a lot of things real fast", sort of on the side. So I feel I have been witness to your growth over the years which is one of the most fun parts of being someone's official or unofficial mentor. I am the creator of *The Clutch* which is my monthly feminist coaching program.

Judith: So I mean I feel like you've been a mentor and teacher of mine. And I actually did sit next to you at a recent event and I think it was the first time I was like, "We've become buddies."

Kara: Well, I always thought we were buddies but fair, that's fair.

Judith: But I think I have had you on a pedestal and I think it was the first time I sat next to you on a pedestal so to speak. And in my heart and mind the dynamic was different which is kind of, I think, funny about mentorship relationships. So let's start, what is mentorship to you? When you hear that word what comes to mind for you?

Kara: Yeah. You'd think I would have prepared for this interview. It's interesting because I actually, for me, mentor is not a word that I use that often. And so when I did think about this podcast a little bit before I showed

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

up, but I think to me a mentor is somebody who is – there's something sort of - what's the right word? Track specific about it, it's someone who is doing something that you are also doing. They've done the same thing. It's not like, well, I am a life coach and my mentor is a nuclear physicist. It's sort of like they are probably doing what you do at a higher level.

They have done what you have done before in some way. It doesn't always have to be professional necessarily but I think a mentor is someone who you feel you've walked this path that I want to walk, even if some of the details are different or maybe I want to take a little bit of a different path. You have experience and wisdom to share with me. I think in my mind I always think of mentors as, and this is definitely subjective. I think of a mentor as unpaid.

I see there's parts of the coaching sphere where people talk a lot about offering coaching mentorship, that's a program you can buy with them which seems to just be high level one-to-one business coaching I guess. And I think to me I've always thought of a mentor as somebody who is kind of playing it forward. Is that the term? But that it's not a contractual financial relationship, somebody takes you under their wing and wants to kind of help lead you through this process of whatever you're trying to do.

I mean I came from academia, first a lawyer then academia where your success especially in academia is very dependent on having these sort of mentor relationships or relationships with older faculty members who are going to guide you, are going to kind of be your champion, are going to stand up for you, are going to advance you. And coaching has proven to be a little bit more wide open field in terms of what a mentor is and how that works. That's a long way of saying it but that's what I've got.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

Judith: No, I love that because there's two things that I perked up on, first the use of the word 'contract' but we will circle back to that in a second. Two lawyers, two former lawyers.

Kara: Two former lawyers.

Judith: Two former lawyers chatting. I will put a pin in that because I do want to talk about, maybe there's not a financial contract but I think there's a social contract that kind of forms in that dynamic. But since you did come from academia and you did see the mentorship dynamic there, how have you taken maybe some of the things that you observed or witnessed in that dynamic to your business as a business owner and the fact that you lead a movement of a ton of amazing women?

Kara: I mean I think that they feel very different to me. One of the things I didn't like about academia was that it felt your future was dependent on these relationships with people who could be. Life tenure does strange things to people's brains, just much like federal judges. They could be very fraught complicated relationships and it definitely felt like a system in which you have to keep your mentor happy. And not all academic mentors are good at keeping things to the professional. It's just a very weird enmeshed system.

So I was kind of not a huge fan of that. And so when I left academia and I was doing what I needed to do in that way but I think what I love about being an entrepreneur is that it feels to me mentorship is both essential but less essential. So it's essential in the sense that the problem with being an entrepreneur is that you have no idea what you're doing ever pretty much. You're making it all up as you go along. And if you don't have someone ahead of you who can help you, you're really just reinventing the wheel every single fucking day which is just really inefficient.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

So it's sort of more crucial but it feels much freer. You can figure out who you want to try to have as a mentor. In academia it's like, well, I work in this topic area and there's these three people who are experts in this field and this one is at my institution so I guess that's the person that I have to try to attach myself to. Whereas as an entrepreneur you can, I mean there's such a huge variety. But I do think for me the defining quality of the relationship is that it is, yeah, not financially.

It's actually interesting, I have paid people I would consider to be mentors I have paid for coaching programs with them. So it's not like money tarnishes the relationship or something. But you can pay for somebody to be your coach and they may or may not ever become your mentor. Somebody who's your mentor is somebody who to me is invested in your success over time and is with you on that journey. I feel I could, and I don't know, it would be interesting to think about do both people agree that you're their mentor.

I can think of myself as someone's mentor. I feel if I didn't see you for five years and I saw you somewhere I would just be like, "Tell me everything, what's your business model? What are you doing? Tell me all your bad thoughts." And I would probably coach you without permission. And that to me, I always get to do that which I feel we have that relationship. I would ask for consent, I should say. I probably would not coach without consent.

But it does feel to me that is the nature of that relationship is I could not have seen you for a while, you could not have paid me for coaching for years. And that doesn't change the nature of that relationship.

Judith: Yeah, I love that and I think you're right. You could pay for coaching, you could pay for services or someone's knowledge base but doesn't ergo therefore they're your mentor. I think there's something

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

special and unique about that relationship. But I agree, I don't think everyone – I don't think both parties have to agree though.

Kara: Yeah, I think there probably are people who think I'm their mentor and I would never say that I was their mentor. And then maybe people that I think they're my mentee, I mean I don't really use the term 'mentee' in my own head. But there may be people who I think I am sort of a mentor to them and they're like, "I don't care what you think or I don't want your opinion at all." So it's sort of friendship, I mean I think it's most successful when both people are on the same page but that's not required.

Judith: Yeah, I agree. I think it's such a fun thing to think about, yeah. And I mean obviously I see you as mentor, teacher, friend. And we had a moment and I don't know if you remember this at an event we were at and I pulled out, they gave us these really beautiful journal things, these calendar schedule full of pages so you could make lists of things. And I bust it out and I'm petting this thing, I'm massaging it. I was like, "Oh yeah, I get to make lists."

And without skipping a beat you're like, "No lists, go make offers, no lists for you." And you have my number but it was that beautiful moment. You offered me the thought and I'm like, "Yeah, she's so right, let me not pet the list of journals."

Kara: Right. The list should have one thing on it which is tell people I'm a life coach and ask them to hire me, that's the list.

Judith: That's the list. It's always been the list.

Kara: Yeah. So there's something about the emotional investment that makes something a mentorship. Someone might meet with their business coach all the time and I don't speak to you, well, I speak to you frequently.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

But there could be somebody I don't speak to for six months at a time. And I think of my mentors as this, I feel at any moment Brooke could just slide into my text and be like, "Why did you write that email that way", or whatever. Or just be like, "This was great."

But it's sort of to me it's like at any time that people consider mentors and I'd be like, "I saw that thing you were doing and here's my two cents about it." And I would be like, "Okay, thank you." It's that kind of an ongoing relationship that transcends. There have been times I've paid Brooke for coaching, there's been times you've paid me for coaching but the relationship transcends those containers in some way.

Judith: Yeah, I think that's an interesting point and I think that I'm reflecting on all the mentorships that I've been in either way. And I think that is a dynamic, there is this emotional component of someone having a vested interest in someone else's future or success.

Kara: Yeah. And supporting them and ringing them up. In coaching it's not as much about being a champion in the room when they're discussing partnership but that's not our framework. But I think when I think about my mentors, the people that I think of myself as a mentor to it is, a part of that is hiring them to work events for me and promoting them and their expertise. And there are people that I do that to who I don't think of as my mentees.

So it really is, it's not one thing. It's an emotional relationship that's correlated with some action items but there are people that I hire for my events and who come and whatever. We don't have that kind of relationship. I wouldn't just sidle up to them and be like, "Stop stroking that book, go make an offer." Because that's not the quality of that relationship.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

Judith: Yeah. No, this makes sense. So let me ask you this because I think there is a little bit of – and I'll just use the word 'social contract' for just the nature of the beast of what we're talking about. But the emotional component, that social contract, but I don't think that you can force that. And I think sometimes then people are looking for mentors because they read a book that told them they should have one. They try to force the dynamic. So what would be your advice to someone who's trying to maybe reach out to someone to develop that relationship with them and how do they not be creepy?

Kara: I think the question is why do you want that relationship with them? I am sure there are people who go through the advanced certification of feminist coaching who think of me as their mentor who I've really helped who I have no idea have that belief about me or don't think of myself in that role to them. And that doesn't mean that I'm not their mentor. I am in some way because that's what they took from that work. So I think the difference is what's your thought about it?

If your thought is I just want to learn from this person, I want to learn and grow under this person's tutelage, that's one thing. If your thought is I bet if that person promoted me then I could sign a lot more clients or something then you're coming from this kind of graspy place. I mean the biggest mistake I see people make in general in networking at all is that they do not think about how they can be helpful. They just think about what you can do for them. So as somebody who's been in kind of professions where I had to cultivate very specific mentors.

I had to be, "Okay, there's one person in the country working on this and I need them to like me. How am I going to get myself in front of them? How am I going to make that relationship?" My overriding thought was, what can I do to be of service to that person? How can I help them? Both because there's a natural human reciprocity that happens. If you help someone then

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

they want to help you back. There's psychological studies on this. And I'm not saying this, you shouldn't use this to be manipulative and creepy and weird. But there's something called a reciprocity bias.

People want to help people who have helped them. Humans don't like to feel indebted or to have a favor that someone could draw on. But also it's just, I mean often I think when people want access to me, what it feels like they do is they DM me to flatter me or something where I'm just like, "This is not useful to me. What are you offering me here?" That doesn't create a connection to me.

Whereas if somebody DM's me and is like, "Hey, I know we don't know each other but I saw you post about this and I want to recommend this really good book on that topic. And I read it and here's the top three points I thought were so great and you might love it. Here's a link where your assistant could order it for you." Now, I'm like, "This person sees me, sees the way they can be helpful and is making a connection where they can be helpful to me." Rather than just feeling they are either just fangirling to no purpose or are just kind of – I think people don't even know what they want, they just think success will rub off on them in some way.

Judith: I think you're right. I think that's part of what's driving sometimes some of those weird cold DMs. They are lovely and well meant I think sometimes but they're not thought through.

Kara: Yeah, or people will DM me and ask me to do shit for them, which I'm like, "This is not the way to build a mentor." People will DM me and be like, "Can you recommend a good vegan restaurant in New York" or something. And I'm like, "I'm not even vegan." It would be one thing if I had some expertise in this thing. So I mean I think my number one piece of advice to anybody who does want a mentor and wants to develop that kind of

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

relationship and this doesn't matter whether you're in a law firm, whether you're an entrepreneur, whatever you are.

How can you be helpful to that person? And you do have to take responsibility for it. I mean I think you see this gender breakdown where women wait for their work to be recognized and they want someone to come anoint them. And especially in the corporate context that's generally not going to happen. And there are obviously a lot of corporations have these programs where they will assign you a mentor. And I think the data pretty much seems to be that that doesn't do that much.

The person who's kind of assigned to you is not necessarily going to develop the relationship with you where they want to go to bat for you. So you really do have to take control and ownership of that and that means figuring out who could I learn from who would be useful to cultivate it and how can I be of service to them so this is an equally kind of enriching relationship?

Judith: Yeah, I love that, and solid advice. And understanding that even if you have reached out to them in a way that is sufficiently nice, not creepy, and is of service that they still get the right to not want to engage with you further or develop a relationship with you. I mean there's something to be said for persistence but I think sometimes just recognizing they're allowed to be like, "Thank you." And then that's the end of that.

Kara: Right, you even bought yourself a mentorship even with a book recommendation. It's an investment of time and energy. And the truth is I think maybe this is an unpopular opinion, I'm not sure, even if you're trying to be helpful and you can be somewhat helpful, generally mentorship is more useful for the mentee than for the mentor. It is an unequal relationship in that way. That's why to me it always has to transcend the contractual.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

There's some emotional investment there where somebody just has taken a shine to someone and wants to help them succeed.

I want to see my students succeed, not because it's – sure, it's good publicity I guess for the advanced certification on some level but that's not really why. It's just I have taken an interest in you. I have developed a personal relationship with you. I see your potential and I want you to get out of your own way so you can blow your own mind. That's why I'm a coach. But that relationship is going to be unequal to some extent and that's okay but you still want to try to offer something.

If somebody's going to give you a full meal you still show up at their house with a bottle of wine. It's going to be uneven and that's fine, they've invited you to enjoy their hospitality but you don't show up empty handed or just show up and stare creepily at them. You bring something.

Judith: Yeah. And I think it's a great segue into something that you teach in advanced certification, but something that has a profound effect on me is sometimes hierarchies that develop in coaching relationships. But I think sometimes also probably in a mentor/mentee dynamic and how do we navigate that? If you're a mentor, I think a lot of the women, humans who listen to the podcast, they probably are a mentor to someone and how do we be mindful of?

And from your approach, those hierarchies are developed as someone is looking up to us and there is a differential in power dynamics between the mentor and the mentee.

Kara: Yeah. I mean I think that one of the reasons I was a little hesitant about this topic is that I actually don't think of myself as someone who has a lot of mentors. I think of myself as someone who has a lot of colleagues because I don't personally – I mean there are a couple, I guess, one or two

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

people who I would call my mentors in the coaching space. But there are also people who I would just call my colleagues, that someone else might call a mentor.

One of my colleagues who's a friend of mine, I mean her business is three times as big as mine is. I could totally call her a mentor in the sense that I do coach her sometimes but mostly I'm getting information from her. I'm not as useful to her on at least the strategic level. But what I can offer is emotional coaching but I don't think of her that way. I just think of her as a colleague. And so I think to me that's part of one of the things we teach in the advanced certification is removing the hierarchy from the coach client relationship.

And I think the same is true for me and I don't find mentor, mentee kind of the main framework that I use to think about the people that I sort of draw wisdom or insight from or support because I more feel I'm a mentor to other people maybe. But when I think about myself I think more of my colleagues who support me. So I think that that's also – I mean a beautiful thing about coaching is that we know that when you're in it, you're in it and that really the other person doesn't have to be ahead of you in business.

They don't have to be a rocket scientist. They don't have to be the best coach in the world to help you. They just have to not be in it while you're in it. And even if they're brand new and you've been doing it for 10 years they can help you. So I think this is obviously not my most coaching interview ever but this is part of what I was getting at with that's sort of you have to bring something to the table. It's not a one way supplicant relationship.

Somebody can both be your colleague and be ahead of you in some ways and yet you can also have something to offer, have something to bring to the table and not expect that they should just want to kind of answer all your questions and tell you what to do.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

Judith: Yeah, because I don't think that is – I mean I don't know that I would want the dynamic either. And I don't think it would be fruitful for a long term emotionally stable relationship dynamic with any human is tell me everything I'm supposed to do and what I want to hear and validate me.

Kara: Your mentor's not your emotional validation vending machine.

Judith: Yes, that's a quotable you all, pause there.

Kara: I talk about emotional validation vending machines all the time, your boss, your partner, your parents, everybody including your mentor.

Judith: Including your mentor, yeah, but I love your thought I think that these are your colleagues, the colleagues who support you. I think there's a phrase you use and yeah, I think there's something about that in terms of, especially women are socialized to, I think, create hierarchies in our brains and then put ourselves at the bottom of the hierarchy itself. So yeah, what if the people we think are mentors, [inaudible] or in fact just colleagues who are supporting us, how differently do we relate to them if we come from that place?

Kara: Yeah, I think there's something beautiful. What's beautiful about the concept of a mentor is that it is someone who is invested in your wellbeing and your success for kind of no particular reason really. Not because it really benefits them, not because they need you to succeed, not because they're necessarily going to get something out of it, really just because they, and I think you see in any area there are people who like to mentor a lot of and have a lot of those kinds of relationships and people who don't have any.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

So it really is about the person and whether that's the way they like to relate to people. And that way it really is more like I think friendship than it is a contractual relationship.

Judith: I love this. I love this whole conversation. So I mean we've hinted now so we could totally tell the people what they're dying to know.

Kara: What's the secret? Who are my mentors? Who are my mentees? Which of the five are really my true mentees?

Judith: Who are your favorites? Tell me.

Kara: Who are my favorites? So whoever I'm talking to is my favorite. My partner's kids are always asking me who I love more. It's just such a biological drive to just be like, "Got to get those resources away from my sibling."

Judith: Even the emotional ones.

Kara: Even the emotional ones, doesn't matter, I've got to get all the Fritos and I need all the love.

Judith: My gosh, I love it. That's how we are. So I won't even ask you that necessarily because I think, I mean our conversation has been about sort of dismantling that kind of stuff. But let's talk a little bit about advanced feminist certification because you do teach having no hierarchies and having different dynamics and relationships in the coaching/coachee relationship which I don't hear that anywhere else but within your program.

Kara: Yeah. Well, I think one of the ways it relates to this mentor/mentee conversation is that, so I think we set up hierarchies when we feel that we need something from someone else to succeed. So when our self-worth or

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

our self-esteem is kind of conditional on success and then we believe that we don't know how to get it, we need something from someone else.

And then that's when we kind of fall into a hierarchical relationship where we want the other person to have the answers and be able to tell us what to do and tell us the answers and be the solution to all of our problems basically. And liberate us from the kind of weight of having the authority in our own lives. And in the advanced certification in feminist coaching one of the things I teach as you said is how to kind of – I'm constantly trying to say the word 'de-hierarchicalize' which is not a word, kind of de-hierarchy.

Take the hierarchy out of the coaching relationship so that it is more of a mutually, it's a facilitative peer relationship more than it is a top down expertise. And I think all that comes from the same place. Coaches, I think it's the same coaches will be the people who feel they're supposed to be the experts to their client and then they want someone else to be the expert to them. That's going to be the same person who thinks that it's their job to know everything for somebody else and then they don't know anything for themselves and someone else should know everything for them.

But when you have, I think when you create that sort of deep self-acceptance and authority in your own life and authority in your own business and your own coaching practice then you just don't need to be the expert. And you also don't feel the need to have hierarchy in your mentor relationships. You still totally, I hire coaches all the time because I want you to help me with this specific thing.

But my framework going into it is always that we are peers trying to figure something out and this is an area where they either have a little more skill or a little more knowledge or just are not all fucked up about in the head the way I am at the moment. And so that's how they're going to help me. And I think that's also impacted how I feel about even my own mentors where I

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

just, I don't take things as – I mean one of the things that stood out so much when I went through life coach certification was that I was so grateful that I had done a lot of body positivity work and kind of even fat activism.

Learning before I went to coach certification because it meant that even from the very beginning even though I love my coach and teacher and she's changed my life, I went into it being like here's this big thing that we don't agree about and I'm going to – because I don't teach weight loss coaching and I teach body positive coaching. And I sort of had to grapple with how do you do that, how do you have a mentor or a teacher where you don't agree with a big thing they're teaching and how do you make peace with that?

And I think going through that process that was probably the very beginning of taking out the hierarchy because I allowed there to not be a pedestal and me. And I think I've carried that into how I coach and now how I train other coaches. And I have a whole podcast episode called No Gods, No Gurus. I am nobody's guru, I am nobody's. I had this question come in the other day that was, it was one of those anonymous, ask me anonymous questions and I'll answer them on Instagram. And it was, I love you so much, will you coach, come coach in The Clutch more, you're who we want to see.

And I was like, "I'm not doing that on purpose because I do not want to create a cult of personality around myself. That is not my goal here. I do not want to be the person that you think you need to see to solve your problem or who has all the answers. I want you to see that so many coaches can help you and you have to learn how to help yourself." And my experience in training coaches on how to do this is that it just is such a relief to them to not have to be like, I'm supposed to be the expert.

I'm supposed to know what's supposed to happen. I'm supposed to know where the client needs to get to. I've got to try to force that resolution on

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

them. It feels like people are coaching like, okay, the revelation train leaves at 3:40 so we've got to get on it because it's 3:25 and I don't feel we're going to get to the station on time and that cramps your coaching so much.

Judith: Yeah. And I think it forces things to happen in a way that's not natural so they don't stick.

Kara: Absolutely. It forces intellectual revelation or insight. People who come to coaching often are coming because they've been to therapy and had plenty of insight and that did not change anything for them. So you can get a big – I mean this is part of the whole thing, when we don't have grounding in our own authority we want the client to have an aha moment so we feel good about ourselves. And so then we're pushing them to have an intellectual revelation that is not going to stick emotionally.

Judith: Yeah. And I think that's true even in mentor relationships where you become invested in the mentee so that you could feed your own ego. Or you're invested in the client's outcome so that you could feed your own ego. And I say ego, not as a bad word, we all have egos but that's not the purpose of that relationship and somehow because we're human we do this. So if you start to get graspy, so and so didn't have an aha moment, they didn't have this huge revelation or a big breakthrough or whatever language you use.

That's the sign you are not lined up with your client, you totally are trying to force them into this moment so that you can feel better.

Kara: Yeah, I always say when we're done coaching you should feel kind of angry and confused. That's the good place. That's where I want you to be.

Judith: Yeah. I mean I think some of the best coaching I've had with you is, I've either told you "ew."

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

Kara: Yeah, it's either been a lot of disgust or crying but neither way has it been like, "Well, the sunlight of revelation has shone on me and I feel great."

Judith: I feel so much better. No. Yeah, or crying. And I think one time I told you, "You broke my heart. I think you broke my heart."

Kara: Just to be clear, I didn't break her heart by being mean to her. I was coaching her. She actually was being mean to herself.

Judith: No, it was the most unloving coaching.

Kara: Yeah, she was being mean to herself. Right. If people are coming to you because they are stuck and having trouble with something. So the idea that it could just be tied up in a pretty little bow without them going through any discomfort, the whole reason people come to coaching generally is that they are not willing to feel uncomfortable. So it's pretty rare that the medicine is going to be, don't worry, I'll solve this for you and you won't have to feel uncomfortable.

Judith: Yeah. And it wouldn't stick. If you had just told me what you thought I wanted to hear so that I could feel better I would not have walked away from that particular coaching conversation with, I mean just it was weeks later and I still think about it. I'm like, "Oh my gosh."

Kara: But this is such a good example of why coaching is so important also. And a mentor doesn't fill the spot of a coach because if somebody is paying me as their coach I'm going to show up and hold that space as long as I need to. I'm going to coach them. If I'm sort of your mentor and I'm just sitting next to you at an event I'm just going to be like, "Oh my God, here's what you should think, let me just tell you your thoughts." Which is fine

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gatton

especially when you've known somebody a long time, sometimes that works.

But it's very different, you don't show up in the same way so I also would say I don't think anybody should only rely on mentorship. There's something beautiful about each of these relationships and they're very different but one is not better than the other. And you still need a coach and a coach and a mentor are not doing the same thing. As a mentor I'm much more likely to just be like, "This is how you should rewrite that email." Whereas as a coach I'm going to be like, "Okay, what was the thought when you wrote this email? Let's take you through that. Let me coach you on that thinking."

I'm trying to get you to figure out how to write the email differently on your own whereas when I have sort of my mentor hat on I'm just like, "Oh my God, why would you say it this way? Go do that again."

Judith: Yeah. And I love that we need both in our lives for different purposes, different roles, absolutely. And we don't have to expect with any relationship friends that one person's going to be the end all be all to meet our wants and needs for all purposes.

Kara: No, they're very different things. Sometimes I just want someone to be like, "How should you set up your mailing list?" I don't need to be coached through it, I'm like, "I just literally don't have the information. It's not a coaching issue." But then sometimes I need coaching and those are two very different things and we don't want to conflate them.

Judith: I love that. Alright, you all, till next time, stay tuned for the Mentor series. We are out.

UFYB 280: Mentorship & Hierarchy in Coaching: A Conversation with Judith Gaton

If you're loving what you're learning in the podcast, you have got to come check out *The Clutch*. *The Clutch* is the podcast community for all things *UnF*ck Your Brain*. It's where you can get individual help applying the concepts to your own life.

It's where you can learn new coaching tools not shared on the podcast that will blow your mind even more. And it's where you can hang out and connect over all things thought work with other podcast chickens just like you and me. It's my favorite place on Earth and it will change your life, I guarantee it. Come join us at www.unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. That's unfuckyourbrain.com/theclutch. I can't wait to see you there.