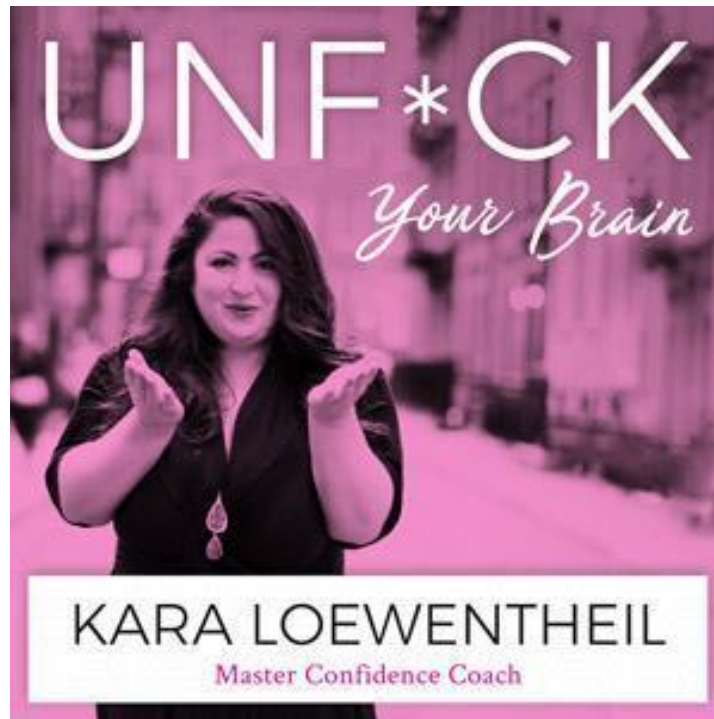


UFYB 287: Change Requires a Leap of Faith



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 we? I am feeling tired but amazing. I wrapped up teaching the Stop Second Guessing Yourself Challenge last week and then I had a big weekend. We were doing some filming for a film project we're working on and we had a joint birthday party for me and kind of a commemoration of my maternal grandmother's birthday. She's dead, which was confusing to some of the attendees who didn't know that. She died over a decade ago but it was her kind of 100th anniversary of her birth.

I don't know if you call it someone's birthday once they've passed away. And our birthdays were two days apart and so we had a joint birthday party/commemoration party right across the street from where she was born on the Lower East Side, where I also lived for a long time. So that was super fun. My childhood best friend, Meg, came up from Maryland and we had family and we had some of my grandmother's friends who are still around, my mother's friends, my friends, it was just a really lovely time. That's a lot for a week for me.

So I am looking forward to, I'm about to go on vacation for three or four days in New Orleans, celebrate my birthday. And I plan to just read a novel and sit by the pool and send the gentleman consort out to go talk to strangers. But I am always so glad when I do these challenges, the Stop Second Guessing Yourself Challenge was incredible. We had thousands of women participate from all over the world. And even in just a week, the change that people experienced.

We had someone who stood up for themselves to get money back from their financial adviser who was trying to not give it to them. Someone finally telling their partner how they wanted to parent and what their true thoughts and feelings were about how their partner was parenting which they had

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been sitting on for six to eight years. Learning to trust their intuition. People taking the leap to take time off, to explore their options, making career decisions.

There were just so many women who were able to use this work, this coaching work that I teach to change their lives in a short period of time. And that always makes me think about what is it that helps people create change? Obviously I think about this all the fucking time. It's literally my job.

But I think one of the most interesting puzzles or questions for me is what is the difference between people who are able to change their lives and those who don't. Able is not the right word because I truly believe that everyone is capable of doing it. So it's almost what's the difference between those who choose to do it or choose not to do it? That choice may be happening subconsciously. It's not a moral issue. It's not an issue of blame. There are areas of my life that I have not yet changed even if I maybe want to.

So it's what is the difference even within one person, what's the difference for me in the areas I have changed and the areas that I have yet to change? And we see this all around us, I mean as a coach I see this all the time. Some people never change and some people change an enormous amount in a relatively a short period of time. And that might be a week or a month or a year or even a couple of years, which in the span of your life is very short. If you're going to live 80 years, two years is a very small part of your life.

So I have been thinking about that a lot this week, what is that ingredient, what makes that difference? And I think it is being willing to take a leap of faith which I mean ironically sounds very religious, a leap of faith. People who believe that a divine power controls their lives, put their faith in that. And I'm here teaching you that you can be in charge of a lot of your own life, most of it. But it still requires a leap of faith which seems weird, but I think that it is what it is. So let me kind of explain what I mean by a leap of faith, it does not mean belief in a universal divinity of any kind.

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Obviously if you believe that, that's totally great. I'm glad that works for you, but that's not what I'm talking about here. So I am a very logical person and I think when I found this form of coaching what I loved about it was that someone could actually explain what was happening in my brain and why and what to do about it. So it wasn't just mystical affirmation. It wasn't something I was just supposed to blindly trust would work even though no one could explain why. It was based on science. It was logical. I could see and explain exactly what was happening.

And when I asked questions, my teacher, Brooke, could debate and explain with me. And she was very patient because I showed up like a very skeptical lawyer and I had a lot of questions. And then I started off my coaching business, coaching only lawyers. So I got extremely good at debating the concepts I was teaching. Lawyers question everything. And it actually made me such a good coach because I was just dealing with people who would ask and critique every idea I put out there. I could explain things from every angle.

I could talk about how I put it all together and why and how it all made sense to me, which I think is why part of the reason that I am an effective teacher of this work is that I don't have any areas of it, I mean obviously the work that I came up with also I came up with. But even the stuff that I learned from somebody else, there were no parts that I was like, "Well, I don't know but it makes me nervous to question so I guess I'll just accept it." Because when you do that you don't really believe in something and then you can't really articulate it and explain it and answer questions or objections or whatever.

Whereas I really turned things over from every possible perspective and so I'm so rock solid in it. And so not surprisingly I attract a lot of people with brains like mine. We love logic. We love having our concerns and objections answered rationally. We love that it's science based. We love that I can explain the cognitive principles behind why what we're doing works. But here is the thing that I have come to understand. Even when

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you understand everything logically, you understand why it would work. You still have to take a leap of faith to try it.

And let me say that again because I do think that those of us who are super logical and especially now we find this kind of work that's very rational. We want to be convinced by rationality that it will work for us. Some of us are waiting to try until we're sure that it will work. And that is not a thing you can ever be sure of ahead of time. Rationality and logic can assure you that it could work or it does work, that it makes sense. There's no obvious logical holes for it to work conceptually.

But they can't convince you that it will work on you because that is a leap of faith. It's still a leap of faith to try even when you understand everything logically. Maybe if you're thinking about signing up to work with someone who promises effortless manifestation based on the messages from their alien seed ancestors. I don't know, I'm probably getting this terminology wrong. There's a real wild world of people that I don't totally understand. Anyway, even if you're signing up to work with someone like that, when you're signing up to work with someone like that, maybe your decision is 99% faith and 1% logic.

And if you're signing up to work with me, maybe it's 90% logic or even 95% logic or 99. But there's still a little leap of faith required because when we want to do something we haven't done before we have to be willing to try before we have all the evidence that it will work. Where we have to be willing to try before we feel absolutely sure. We have to be willing to try something that is maybe different from what we were taught, what the received wisdom is, what our brain has been used to thinking from how everyone around us may be thinking or believing.

I mean I was looking around at this birthday party last night and thinking about what the fuck my grandmother would have thought of me quitting. Going to an ivy league law school and then becoming an academic and then running a thinktank and then quitting to become a life coach on the

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internet. She would have lost her mind. She would have been thrilled in the end that I was successful. She was a business owner and she ran a furniture store. So she appreciated how hard it is to run a business, and that she would have been proud of.

And she would have been proud that I'm successful in this world, but I'm sure the whole time she would have been like, "I cannot believe that this is thing that you're doing." Or would have thought it was a waste of my law degree or whatever. I was looking around the room last night at this party and a lot of people had that concern when I started my journey, and I do not begrudge them. Of course my parents were like, "What are you talking about?" There was no precedent in my life for this being a good idea.

So when you want to try something new, you have to be willing to try something that you don't feel sure is going to work and that applies to so many things in your life. But I think it applies especially to learning how to change your thinking and believe new things. It's sort of the definition of something that you can't be logically convinced into with 100% certainty. If you don't yet believe something, you don't yet believe that your body is beautiful, you don't yet believe that you're lovable, you don't yet believe that you are brilliant and creative and successful, whatever it is.

I cannot logically convince you that you will believe that in the future because you don't believe it now. So there's no logic that I can use there. I can teach you how. I can sort of convince you that it's possible for a person to change that kind of thought. And I can show you how a person would change that kind of thought. But you cannot be 100% convinced before you start that your thought will change to that new thought. If you were already convinced it would, you'd already have the new thought.

You can understand how it would work but you can't know for sure that it will work. You can't foresee the future. And when you tell your brain even subconsciously that you can't do something unless you know it will be successful in the future you completely paralyze yourself. You can't know if

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anything will work until you try. We want it to be certain ahead of time. We want to stand at the edge of the forest that we've never been to before. And we want to be pioneers and explorers. We want to get to the edge of the forest and see what's on the other side that no one's been to.

But we want to be certain we'll get to the other side. And even when you give us a map we're like, "Well, I'm still not 100% convinced that following the map will get me there or that nothing scary will happen so I'm not going to do it." It's scary to try something new when we don't know if it will succeed. And one of the not great things about our brains is that they will convince us that it's better not to even try, even if we feel bad now, just in case we might come out feeling the same way.

We'd rather fear that we are inextricably damaged than actually try to change and fail because we will make the failure mean that our damage is somehow unfixable. So we don't want to try because we're scared and the outcome we fear is actually just having our current same belief about ourselves solidified. We don't want more evidence of what we already believe from failing. So we want to be convinced absolutely ahead of time it will work before we try anything new. But the problem is that nothing important in life works that way.

You can't know how the dream job will work out before you take it. You cannot know where your fitness journey is going to go before you start working out. You can't know how the relationship will end before you start it. You can't really know what parenting will be like before you have a baby, even if you've already had a baby, you don't know what the new one will be like. You can't know if your business will succeed before you begin. Changing your life requires a leap of faith or at least a little step of faith into the unknown.

It requires not being sure and being willing to not know and to not feel certain. Everything required to change our lives requires tolerating some level of risk, some level of unknown. The good news is that we can make

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this easier by deciding on purpose how we will speak to ourselves if we do potentially fail. And the truth is usually what happens is we didn't even really fail. We hit one speed bump that would be no big deal if we kept going, but we interpret it as disastrous failure and we stop.

Whereas just imagine if you're teaching someone to drive and they hit their first speed bump, they're going a little fast, they got a little jolt and then they just took the car home and never drove again. They would tell that story as though the speed bump was this drive ending disaster. When in fact as a regular driver you would know you hit a little speed bump, it happens, you just keep going. We can turn what seems like failure into just a small bump in the road depending on how we talk to ourselves about it.

So we can decide that if we don't see immediate magical fantasy success or our brain has any negative thoughts about us, we're going to beat ourselves up and quit. Or we can decide we're going to give ourselves affirmation and support and love. So we can make the fear of the future less acute by deciding ahead of time what to think about ourselves. We can choose to say things like, "I'm proud of you for trying, let's try again. I'm here for you no matter what. Everyone fails a lot before they succeed, let's keep going."

The same things you'd say to a child who was trying to learn something that you knew they could learn. But we still have to be willing to take that leap of faith that change is possible and not make the emotion we feel mean something. Think about it like, if you jumped off a trapeze when you have a safety harness on, the first minute your stomach still drops even though you have support and you won't fall. Every time I step on stage to give a talk I feel a little anxiety right before but it doesn't mean anything.

That's what trying something new and trying to change can feel like. It can feel a little nauseating or anxiety producing or scary. That's a feature not a bug. That doesn't mean it's the wrong decision, in fact it often means you're on the right track. So for some of you, you're listening and you're thinking

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okay, well I just don't believe that I can change at all so I can't even take a leap of faith, it's too big. And to that I just want to say, I call bullshit. If you're listening to this podcast you do believe you might be able to change your brain.

If you truly 100% did not believe it, you would not be listening to this. There's a lot of podcasts in the world. If you are listening to this podcast, a small part of you wants to change and believes it might possibly be possible. That's the part I want to talk to. That's the part I want you to talk to. You have to elevate that part. You have to amplify that part. You have to listen to that part. We want our little flickering small flame of hope to somehow vanquish the darkness of all of our fear and anxiety.

We want the small new thought pattern to conquer all of our fears by itself. That's our job, we have to fan that flame. The thought pattern itself, that little bit of hope, it needs your help. We have to focus on the belief that it might be possible rather than giving all of our attention to the fear it might not be. We have to literally bring our brains back when they're spinning out and tell them, "I know you're worried, brain but we've got to focus on what's possible right now. Give me three amazing outcomes that might happen."

You have to give your brain direction and you have to be willing to take that leap of faith if you want your life to change. So your leap of faith could be anything in your life. But if the leap of faith that you need is committing to changing your brain, then I want to invite you to join *The Clutch* because we are open for new members right now only through May 2nd. *The Clutch* is a feminist monthly coaching program. So you can stay for however many months feel right to you, because it's all about empowering you to be in charge of your own life.

When you join you get instant access to the Feminist Mindset Fix course which is the first month long course that everyone takes when they join, to learn the basic structure and the practice for changing any thought. And then you also get access to life coaching calls with me and the other *Clutch*

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coaches. Our Ask the Coaches form where you can submit a written question and get a coaching response any time. Every question gets answered.

There are 100 bonus Q&A podcasts. So if you're a podcast listener then that is an element that is going to be amazing for you, it's almost 100, maybe it's 98 episodes of me answering coaching questions from people inside *The Clutch*. Some of them are conceptual questions but a lot of them are sort of here's what's going on with me, how would you coach me? How could I coach myself? So that's an incredible resource. And we have an optional Facebook group. It's not required. All of the coaching and teaching and resources in *The Clutch* are in a membership site that you log into.

But we do have a Facebook group for kind of community if that's something that you like. Again, totally optional. And then once you've done your first month you can stay as long as you like and you can unlock a new course every month on whatever topic you want to work on. We have courses on the nervous system and trauma, on romantic relationships, on sex, on family drama, self-confidence, work, money and negotiation, body image, eating and movement, all of the major areas of your life.

And I want to, for those of you who sort of have been thinking about joining *The Clutch* for a while, I want to relate a story about a new *Clutch* member who I coached recently during our challenge because I was coaching her about the decision to join. And actually whether or not you want to join *The Clutch* this will be relevant to you because the thought process is literally the same for anything we want to try but are afraid to try or are holding back from, out of fear of regret.

So she raised her hand for coaching about this and she had a couple of concerns about joining *The Clutch*. And the first was money and that part actually we coached through pretty easily. Because given the way that women are socialized to think about money it is beyond a shadow of doubt in my mind that every woman can find or create at minimum the extra \$97 a

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month to pay for *The Clutch* if she learns how to manage her mind and think on purpose because I see this happen with thousands of women.

It might be applying for a job that pays more. It might be asking for a raise in your current job. It might be rearranging your budget with kind of a cleaner set of thoughts about your priorities. It might be working on a shopping pause if you tend to shop to handle your feelings. You might be talking to your spouse about investing in your mental and emotional health when you've been afraid to talk to them about that. It might be starting a small side hustle.

It might be, we just had somebody in the recent challenge who had been ignoring some financial stuff in her life because she was overwhelmed and kind of scared of it and didn't think she could figure it out. But through self-coaching she was able to sit down, figure it out and access a pot of money that had been left over at a previous job that she had been ignoring because she was afraid of dealing with it. So this student that I was coaching had debt she was paying down. And she was thinking of it as *The Clutch* versus the debt.

I can either pay down my debt or I can pay for *The Clutch*. My experience has been that when people learn how to manage their mind, they actually pay their debt down much faster for the same reasons. A lot of the reasons that we create or have trouble paying off consumer debt have to do with partly so much shame that we have around it because women are socialized to be passive about our finances and to believe that we're bad with money. And then especially if we have created debt, that reinforces that belief.

And so we often haven't done kind of simple things like sit down and think differently about our budget, like consolidate our loans, look into our interest rates, look for those small part-time sources of income or negotiate for the raise or apply to the better job. My experience is when women learn how to manage their minds they generally learn how to create more

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resources or sometimes they are sort of figuring out a different way of using the resources they have.

But the way that we are socialized to think about money is such a deep part of our spending, budgeting, debt, all of those money patterns. That it's sort of like it's a vicious cycle. If you don't learn how to manage your mind about that stuff then you will have a much harder time creating more wealth, paying off your debt, learning how to be in charge of your money. And the same thing applies to time. Part of the reason that we often feel like we don't have enough time is because the way we use our time is driven by an unmanaged mind.

We waste so much time feeling shitty about ourselves. I mean the amount of time that I wasted before I found coaching, numbing myself out with Netflix for hours and hours. I mean I like a Netflix binge once in a while still, don't get me wrong. But every night ruminating over decisions I'd already made, rereading text messages over and over and over, texting 12 different people about the email I sent and did I phrase it right? I mean that actually adds up to so much fucking time. Saying yes to things that we don't want to do because we're people pleasing, that's a full-time job for some of us.

So I think of it as sort of the analogy of somebody who is walking to a store and it's going to take them two hours to get there. And somebody stops them after 15 minutes and says, "Listen, you've got to pause for a half hour but if you do I can teach you how to drive and then the store is only 15 minutes away, let's say. So you've walked 15 minutes, I'm going to spend half an hour teaching you how to drive. And then you'll only have to drive 15 minutes. You're going to get to the store in an hour rather than two."

And the person says, "No, I can't stop, I don't have time, I can't learn to drive. I've got to get to the store so I can't stop and learn." That's what we're doing when we tell ourselves that we're too busy to learn to manage our minds. We are putting off and foregoing the thing that would actually

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get us much more time back in our week because we've convinced ourselves we don't have time to do it.

Anyway, so we talked through the money and the time. That was a concern, but that that was sort of actually the kind of shorter part for her. Because when we got through that, what we got to was what the student was really afraid of and the reason that this applies no matter what kind of decision you're making. Is that it was her thoughts she would have about herself if she tried this work, if she tried joining *The Clutch* and it 'didn't work'.

One of the things I think is fascinating about this is that people who have this thought pattern are generally people who have been listening to the podcast and the podcast has helped them. If you're listening to the podcast and the podcast has helped you, that means your thoughts have already changed some, which means it already works. You already know it works. So what we're really afraid of is what we're going to think to ourselves if we don't do it perfectly. And she was afraid she would think things like, see, I never follow through. I didn't do it right. I can't change.

I'll always be miserable. I wasted money. I'll always be in debt. There's something wrong with me. And all of that was going to lead to deep shame. That's what she was afraid she would feel, deep shame, she was wrong and bad and not good enough and there was no hope for her. And that is really what I want to tell all of you whether you join us in *The Clutch* or not, that that shame is the thing that we are often trying to avoid by not taking that leap of faith. We think it's about the circumstances. We think we're trying to avoid losing money or getting rejected or our partner leaving us or losing our career, whatever.

We think that it's about these circumstances, but even when it seems very circumstantial, if you ask yourself, what are you afraid you'll feel when that happens? And then you ask yourself, what will I be thinking, you're going to discover most likely it is thoughts about yourself. That is a rule as far as I

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can tell. So if that leap of faith you do need to make is to join *The Clutch* then I want to invite you to do that. We are open until May 2nd.

You can text your email address to +1347 934 8861. You don't need a code, just text your email to +1347 934 8861. And we'll send you the link. Or go to unfuckyourbrain.com/clutch. So, unfuckyourbrain.com/clutch. And if your leap of faith is something else then I want you to take that leap of faith. Either way, remember that you can't be sure that change will work before you try it. You can't wait to try to change your life until your brain is fully convinced it'll work. That's not happening. That day is never coming. So if you're waiting for that, you're actually choosing to never change.

It's not a leap of faith you need to take in me. It's a leap of faith in yourself, that's what matters most. We have been socialized to not have faith in ourselves. But your life can't change until you're willing to take that small leap of faith for yourself. Have a beautiful week my chickens and I can't wait to meet some of you in *The Clutch*.