



# WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

Katrina Ubell: You are listening to the Weight Loss for Busy Physicians Podcast with Katrina Ubell M.D. Episode number 46.

Intro: This is Weight Loss for Busy Physicians. The podcast where busy doctors like you get the practical solutions and support you need to permanently lose the weight and feel better, so that you can have the life you want. This is the resource you've been looking for to guide you on the journey to overcome your stress eating and exhaustion and move into freedom around food. Here's your host, Dr. Katrina Ubell.

Katrina Ubell: Hey there my friend. How are you? Welcome back to the podcast. Thanks for tuning in. Remember how we used to tune the radio. That's what that means. Tune in. There's so many funny things like that. Right? My kids asked me the other day, "Why do we say pick up the phone?" Or, "Hang it up." Right? Why do we hang it up? Well, back in our day, we had to hang it up on the wall, and that's how it was. It's so funny. How our lives have changed in just not that many decades.

Anyway, you guys are coming through for me and leaving me some iTunes reviews. It's a slow and steady process, so if you haven't left one, don't think, "Oh good, now she can stop talking about this." I still have a lot of room to move. What I've noticed is that many of are leaving me a star rating, which I really, really appreciate, but not always

leaving me the review. So if you have left a star rating, and wouldn't mind going back and leaving a quick review, that would be great.

But I wanted to share one of the reviews that one of you left that just put a huge smile on my face, and I thought you guys would really appreciate and enjoy hearing it. So the title of it is, "Life Changing", and the name of the person it says ... Because you don't have to put your real name. Right? You can make something up.

It says, "weareallthewaves" all smooshed together, weareallthewaves, and for a split second I was like, "What?" Then I thought, oh okay. So who remembers? Katrina and the Waves. Remember? Walking on Sunshine.

If you're too young, you're gonna have no idea what I'm talking about. But that was seriously one of the most special things that happened when I was growing up. That there was something, anything, that had my name on it because you know when you're a kid, and you go to those junky touristy places that have mugs with kids' names on them and key chains and stuff. No one ever had Katrina. So the fact that there was anything that had my name associated with it was very exciting. Plus it's a fun song. It's totally great.

Then of course, Hurricane Katrina came, and that ruined everything, but still. Anyway, I love the creativity on that, weareallthewaves. Okay so here is what she writes. I'm gonna assume it's a she. Yeah it is because she talks about her husband. Okay.

"I thought I'd listen to this podcast for some weight loss tips. Instead, I have transformed my life. I have learned to view and respond to situations without emotion, even the really frustrating situations I face at work with complex patients and long hours. I've learned to respond to my toddler and husband without feeling irritable. Not because

I'm suppressing my feelings, but because I have legitimately changed my thinking. I've started sharing this information with patients, friends, and coworkers, and everyone is better for it. After an exceptionally busy day, my husband actually questioned how busy it was because quote, 'You seem so calm and happy. This isn't like you.' Unquote. I feel so fortunate to have come across this podcast, although I wish I had learned it sooner. I will definitely be sharing these methods with my daughter."

Thank you so much for that review. I love that. Right? When people start going, "What's going on with you?" I want some of what you've got. This sounds great. You seem like you're doing really, really awesome.

And I agree. I wish I had learned all this stuff sooner, but then I just think, well, but then I wouldn't have had the same life experience I've had, and I wouldn't change anything because it's made my life what it is today, which is amazing. So I agree, I definitely agree that teaching these things to our children will be just a complete life-changing experience for them.

They, of course, won't appreciate it because they won't know any different. But I mean, what a gift to give to them. Right? So good. So thanks so much weareallthewaves for leaving me that. I love it.

You guys, I also want to tell you about something else that happened to me that I did recently. I just got back yesterday from Seattle for the long weekend with my husband. I had mentioned that I was going to be doing this a number of podcasts ago. I believe it was when I was talking about how I'm going to be speaking at a retreat in January in Arizona at Miraval.

And I mentioned that the same woman whose name is Kathy Stepien, apparently I have been mispronouncing it the whole time. But I met her this weekend. Now I know better. She runs the Institute for Physician Wellness, and

so she is doing this Physician Wellness Retreat in January that I'm speaking at.

But she also was doing this weekend workshop for medical couples, and it was this past weekend. So I was needing quite a bit of CME credit, kind of suddenly, and I happened to be on the phone with her talking about something else. And she mentioned, hey you know what? There's still space, if that's something that you might want to do.

And I thought, what are the chances. Right? Immediately go the negative. What are the chances that I can find childcare, that my husband's not on call, that we don't have some other thing going on that we can't skip or miss. And I'm telling you, it all fell together. It was amazing. We couldn't believe it.

So we went. We did not go because we felt like we had massive marriage problems. And apparently, according to the presenters, they get all kinds of people. People on the verge of divorce, people who think everything's amazing, and everybody in between.

But we went, my husband and I, kind of with this idea of, let's just get away. It'll be fun no matter what. Hopefully, we'll learn a thing or two. We've been married 16 years, and we think we have a great marriage. But we're kind of like, well there's probably something we can improve on.

And so we went to this retreat really just hoping also, I'm just going to put this out there. I was really hoping that it wasn't gonna be this airing your dirty laundry kind of a thing. Or kind of things that we would have to do, little skits or role playing we would have to do that would feel really uncomfortable and kind of lame. You know how your brain ... You're just like, really? Do we have to do that?

So we went in there, just trying to have an open mind thinking well, I'm sure we can learn something. And it was

fantastic, you guys. It was seriously so great for our marriage. I just can't even speak highly enough for how great it was. It was called The Art and Science of Love: A Weekend Workshop for Couples. And it's based on the research by John and Julie Gottman.

If you don't know who they are ... It seems like a lot of people are kind of like, "Oh yeah, I think I've heard of them. I've heard of that." They are these PhD psychologists, who've been researching, clinically and from a research perspective, they have been researching married couples for 40 years, over 40 years.

So not only do they just kind of watch what people do, they are actually measuring their physiology. They have halter monitors on them. They're measuring the sweat that they're producing. They're having them leave urine samples, so they're checking their stress hormones in their urine.

They're really, really trying to understand how married couples interact, and then also looking at married couples who have a great marriage, who are happy and stay together happily for a long period of time, and what they're doing.

So it's not like they created this sort of hypothesis, like this is how we think people should act when they're married. Let's see if it works for people. What they did was they just studied people who were successful in marriage, and people who were not successful in marriage. And synthesized all that information to come up with the certain things that people do that are successful. Then they've been able to come up with a way of predicting whether a couple will become divorced in the future with over 90% accuracy. Isn't that amazing?

So they know for sure, what's not gonna work. Don't do the things the people who are gonna ... You know 90% chance of breaking up do. We don't want to be doing what

they're doing. And what I also didn't expect, but found really helpful was that the way they talk about certain things that build a strong marriage relationship can completely be extrapolated to other relationships as well, particularly our children. So helpful, I could completely see, actually where I was making a lot more of those mistakes with my relationships with my kids than I was even in my own marriage.

So the second day you talk about conflict, and how to work through that. And we really were kind of like, these are not even big problems, but we have to pick something, okay let's ... We picked two different things. Serious breakthroughs you guys.

Because sometimes we're the ones who have the problem, and we don't really think it's anything deeper at all or kind of based in anything more. Then you go through something like this, and you're like, "Oh my God. That's why this is so important to me. Oh." Then the partner is thinking, "Okay, I get it now. I get why this keeps coming up."

I just really can't even speak more highly of it. It was so great. The two presenters, one was Jack Crosen, and he's a PhD clinical psychologist who loves working with medical couples. And he does a lot of work at Oregon Health Sciences University with the medical students there. So he shared a lot of that work that he's done, which was really, really fantastic.

And then Caralee Frederic, and she's a licensed clinical social worker in Colorado. And she's Gottman trained, so she's been teaching these skills in a workshop setting but also to her individual clients for many years now. She was fantastic. It was such a good balance of having like a male and a female and different age groups and different experiences. It was really, really great.

And what I honestly have to say was so great too was, you know we're together with couples, but everyone had their own kind of private space. We were always able to talk. I never felt like anybody was listening in or judging us or anything.

There's no real sharing. You're not raising your hand, or you know, "What did you guys find from that exercise?" You're literally are just kind of having your own experience learning from it. Of course, you can ask any questions and ask for help. But it really is private in that sense.

So we got to know some of the couples sitting at lunch or in things like that, and that was great and really fun. But it wasn't anything like really getting super personal about your marriage, which I think is nice because it's kind of a leap of faith to just jump into this marriage thing, this retreat, going, are we gonna be totally vulnerable here? What is going on?

So I did want to just let you guys know, and honestly, there's literally nothing in it for me. I don't get paid or any kickback or anything. I just am a raving fan, and I want to share what I'm loving and finding useful with all of you.

So Kathy, who runs the Institute for Physician Wellness, she is willing to do another one of these retreats for couples with the same presenters. But she would like to understand what the interest is for that, and also, get some information about where would be a good location.

So if you think you might want to do this with your spouse, and you don't ... Well I say spouse, but really you could be partners. You could be even just happily dating. I mean really anybody who's coupled in any way can benefit from this.

Then what you can do is go to her website with this special link. So go to [instituteforphysicianwellness.com/couples](http://instituteforphysicianwellness.com/couples). Okay, with an

So on the end, [instituteformphysicianwellness.com/couples](http://instituteformphysicianwellness.com/couples). You don't have to pay anything, but you can just put in your name and email, and where you live and that kind of thing. And it gives a little more information about the retreat and the workshop.

And that way she knows that when she's ready to put together another one of these workshops, then you're interested, and she'll send you that information. But highly recommend it if you have the opportunity for sure, you should do it, definitely.

All right, today we're gonna talk about what comes next after you've been through a storm. You know like an emotional storm. And what I mean by a storm is a difficult time in your life. This could be something that was excruciatingly painful, or it could be something that was less intense. But definitely something that was a difficult time.

You know that I've talked about that a little bit on Episode 12. So if you haven't listened to Episode 12, you might want to go back and listen to that. How we work through that when we're in the thick of it, and so we do. We work through it, and we kind of come through on the other end, not necessarily done with our grieving process or the difficult emotions that we experience, but more resolving them. It's not quite as intense. We're much more moving on with our regular daily lives than focusing on those emotions that we were having.

So as we work through that, we're changed as humans. I mean there's no way you can go through difficult times in your life and not come out changed in some way. Sometimes, the way that we're changed can be for the better. Right? Sometimes we're changed for the worse. I think for a lot of us, it's kind of some of both. Right?

But that experience ultimately gets incorporated into our day-to-day thinking, which can sometimes create a lot

more emotional pain for us than just the emotional pain that we experienced from going through that storm.

So I'm going to give you a personal example. Those of you who've listened to Episode 12 know that I lost a baby. I had a full-term stillborn baby girl named Vivian back in 2010. So if you want details on that, then hit up Episode 12. That's where I talk more about that.

So I went through that whole process, which was definitely a storm, definitely emotionally extremely painful. And I definitely didn't want to end my childbearing years on that note. I wanted to try again and have another baby. And we had done invitro to get pregnant with Vivian, so we pretty much knew we were gonna have to do it again. We didn't really want to take a lot of time trying again on our own, so we right away, pretty much, wanted to go ahead with it as soon as the doctors would let us.

It was advised to us from several people that for a number of reasons, a number of good reasons, that we should wait at least six months to get pregnant again. So we did do that, but pretty much right at six months, and I was back in that office ready to go. And I felt a lot of emotional tension, a lot of worry. Right? Then I got pregnant. It worked. Then there was even more emotional tension and even more worry.

In general, I am not that anxious of a person. Of course, I worry like any person does, but I wouldn't say that I'm a really anxious, high-anxiety kind of a person. So it was really kind of a new experience for me to feel filled with so much worry. That I might lose the baby again, that something I was doing might cause some problem, over-analyzing things, really, really wanting this baby to be okay.

And so there were some things that I did to get through this difficult time. It was a long nine months. I went to a pregnancy after loss support group, and that was

monthly. It was kind of like a monthly touch point. I didn't even necessarily feel like I needed a lot of the discussion there, but to me, it was kind of like, well I'm back here again. Another month's gone by, and I'm still pregnant. It was kind of like a way of marking it off, checking it off, still pregnant.

So during that pregnancy, at one point after this baby was viable, I didn't feel like the baby was moving. And so of course that completely freaked me out, and I called by OB's office and went in to get checked out. And the whole time I was just telling myself one thing that felt really, really true in that moment. And that thought was, "I can't bury another child."

And in my mind, I just couldn't go through it again. It had just happened. It wasn't that long before, and I thought there was no possible way for me to repeat that whole experience of losing a baby and come out the other end in one piece. You know? Like if I lost another baby, it would break me. I put myself back together the first time. I will not be able to do that if this happens again.

And so thankfully, the baby was fine, and he was born. And he became my second son. But after a few months, it became clear that he had some developmental issues when he was little. So he first struggled with nursing, and that was a whole thing. But we worked through that and came up with something that worked for both of us.

But then he was late to sit up. He was late to crawl and late to pull to standing and late to walk. And at his nine month checkup, I remember one of my old partners saw us, and after asking the developmental questions about what he could do, he said to me, "So, he's globally delayed." And you can imagine that totally set me off into another, you know, "I can't bury another child" situation. Right?

I was smack dab in, "I can't bury another child" land. My brain went to the absolute worst place. I don't know why my brain clung to this, but I was so terrified that he had spinal muscular atrophy or some other terrible thing that was not going to work out well for him. And then, not work out well for me because I'd have to bury another child. So you can imagine how scared I was. And I kept telling myself, "I can't bury another child. I can't bury another child. I can't bury another child."

I was really spun out with these delays. It was very, very challenging for me, and you can imagine, I mean my daughter hadn't even been dead two years yet at this point. And then one of my other partners, thankfully, I reached out to him, and I just told him what was going on and said, "I'm really, really scared. I don't know what to do. I don't know if I'm doing the right things or what."

And he really, really helped me. And thinking back, I wonder, I mean he's just a great guy, but I also just wonder if he approached me the way he did because he'd gone through some significant health scares with both of his own children. That maybe he kind of knew sort of what I was going through or was able to help me through that.

But he was so great because he didn't just say to me, "Everything will be fine. Don't worry about it. Why are you worrying? It's all good." He said, "Okay grab his chart," because of course we were still on paper charts. "Grab his chart, I want to see. Tell me what he's doing. I want to look at his growth curve. I want to see what's going on here."

And he really took on the role of the watcher or the observer for me because I couldn't do that. I couldn't get myself out of it in that moment, to really think rationally or really question what my thoughts were.

And he was able to do that, to look and think rationally about it and make sure nothing was getting missed. He

didn't want to blow something off that really was a problem because it was possible that really something was going on.

Then he told me what he thought, and what he saw, which was that things were okay, and we were making progress. There was really no reason to panic. There was no reason to do anything else, and that was really, really helpful. Just because I changed my thinking. Right?

I wasn't going into something's really bad that's gonna end up ultimately resulting in the demise of this child. He's fine. All signs right now are pointing to he's gonna be fine. So then I changed my thinking, which made me feel better. Now he's six years old, and he's doing great. He's totally fine.

Then two years after I had him, I got pregnant with my daughter. And then I had the requisite baby isn't moving visit. I always had the panic one for each of those two kids. And I was so scared again. Once again, I told myself, "I can't bury another child." Because I knew that she was a girl. So then I had additional worries that, well here's my chance to have a girl again, and I might lose her too because she's a girl.

And it's not like I ever had this huge dream to have a girl, but it's kind of like the way I felt about it was I didn't even know I wanted a girl until I was gonna have one. Then I had gotten really excited about it. So I was excited again about having a daughter. Totally right back into "I can't bury another child." Then once she was born, that kind of settled down. Those thoughts settled down again.

Then last year, when my oldest son turned 11, I wanted to say, "We decided", but really it was me. I decided that he was ready to ride his bike to places like to his piano lessons and places like that if the weather was cooperating. I have this belief that it's important for kids to

learn their bikes, not because it's fun, but because it's kind of their first sense of independence. Right?

We don't want the first time that they ever go and do anything by themselves to be when they have car keys in their hands at age 16. Right? We want them to have the leash lengthened gradually, so that they are able to learn some of that independence gradually. And the way most kids do that is by riding their bikes.

So I had thought at age 10, that it would be a good idea for him to ride to his piano lessons. But then, the more I thought about it, the more nervous it made me. There's a fairly busy street he would have to cross, and you know how drivers are. People are on their phones. They're not paying attention, and so I was kind of nervous about it, hadn't really instituted it.

Then I literally was planning on having him ride his bike the next week to piano, when the news revealed a story about a 10-year old boy, so the same age, who had died riding his bike to swim lessons or swim team in Madison, so not that far from here. He had gotten hit by a car on his bike, and I was like, "Nope. We're done. Not doing it."

And I was trying to control my circumstances. Right? Trying to control his life, so that I could feel better because then I worried that something bad would happen to him. And you may recall, I think I've told you on this podcast that I can't bury another child. Right?

So then of course, I'm not gonna let him do that. So another year passed, and of course, where we live, biking is maybe if you're lucky, a six-month season. So winter passes, and now he's 11. And I'm thinking, okay, I have to do this. I have to let him go. I can't keep doing this forever. It's not like it's gonna feel so much better when he's 16 and driving a car. I'll probably be even more frightened.

So what we decided to do was to let him do this. Okay? I knew I could not let fear keep me from letting him develop into this self-sufficient human being. We reviewed all kinds of safety measures, and how he would cross streets, and that he would make eye contact with stopped cars before he crossed, so that he knew that they saw him. And that of course, he would wear his helmet and all of that.

And this is a great kid. I mean this is a kid who is conscientious, and I really had no need to be so worried. But my brain thought I needed to be so worried. So the first time. I said goodbye. He grabs his stuff, and I watch him out the window pedal away down the driveway. And my brain tells me, "What if that was the last time you ever see him alive?" Right? Thanks brain. Nice thought there. Followed by, "I can't bury another child."

So this is six years after Vivian died, and I really think it's normal to have thoughts like these for a while after an experience like what I went through. But really at a certain point, it seemed like I had just adopted this thought as fact, without considering whether or not it served me. Whether it had a purpose in my life, whether it was giving me the results that I wanted. It was something that felt very, very true, and I just kept believing it.

I spent some time evaluating this thought because you can imagine that first piano lesson, I was a nervous wreck. And I even had the piano teacher text me when he got there, text me when he left, and it's not that far. I still thought okay clearly I need to do some work on this thought. And of course, by this point, I was a life coach and knew what work to do.

I decided to question it, and this is what I came up with. That thought was a lie. I absolutely could bury another child. Scores of women before me have buried more than one of their children. So when I took the drama out of it and looked at the math, I could see that it definitely could

happen that another one of my children would die before I did. And that I not only could bury that child, but I would do it.

It would feel absolutely horrible. I'd be right back in incredibly, intense emotional pain. And it might even be worse than it was the first time, but my heart would keep pumping, and my lungs would keep exchanging oxygen for carbon dioxide, and my body would live.

This meant that this belief that I couldn't bury another child was just a lie that I had decided to tell myself so often that I believed it. And that lie created so much worry and anxiety and emotional pain and drama in my life.

If you haven't listened to Episode 37 where I explain the concept of math versus drama, then be sure to go back to that one to make sure you really understand what I'm talking about here.

It's incredible how much relief I felt once I changed my thought to, "I might have to bury another child, and I would do it." It's not a rosy, feel-good kind of a thought. Right? But it's reality. It really is the reality, and I can work to accept reality.

When I believed that lie, that I couldn't bury another child, it made me want to control my children's lives. That is never good. Right? I didn't want to let my son ride his bike not even that far, a 10-minute bike ride.

And we can come across as kind of creepy and needy when we're trying to control our children's lives so much and really anybody lives so much. I remember one time meeting a new physical therapist for my little guy who was delayed. I so badly wanted her to think a certain way about him and our family and give me the news that I wanted that I was totally not acting like myself. I seriously wonder what she thought.

She left, and I remember just thinking, "Why was I so weird?" I was embarrassed for myself, and now I know why. I was trying to control what she thought of us in an attempt to hear the good news that I wanted to hear, so that I wouldn't have to worry that I might have to bury another child. And of course, we cannot control what anyone else thinks about us ever no matter what we do.

So I work all the time to remember that my children are on their own life journey, and my job is purely to love them and to provide them with opportunities. What they take away from these opportunities is literally none of my business. But when I make it my business and decide that they need to turn out a certain way or have a certain set of beliefs or values when they're grown up, then I'm trying to control them. I'm thinking I know what's best for them better than they do.

And we do this for lots of people. Right? We do this for our parents, especially as they're aging. We think we know what's better for them than they do. And sometimes we might. Right? If your aging parent has dementia, you probably do know better. Right? But a lot of times we really don't.

Or we often think we know better than our patients do, and how they should act. But really, we don't. We're there to just provide them with information, and then it's up to them to decide what's best for them. So really, any relationship we have with anybody this applies.

Even my youngest, my four-year old because I can imagine some of you thinking, "Wait a minute, my little kids, no, they don't know." It's so easy for us to think that we know better than they do about what they need.

My four-year old, this girl, seriously, she suddenly has developed a furnace for a metabolism or something because she is so hot all the time. And so she suddenly doesn't want to wear a jammy top. You know? She

doesn't want to wear her pajama top, just the bottoms. She literally is just sleeping with nothing on top.

It's Wisconsin here. It's definitely into the 30s or low 40s, and she doesn't want to wear her coat. And when I make it my business, I fight with her about wearing a pajama shirt because I think she's gonna get cold, and then she ends up just taking it off anyway because she's too hot. Right? She knew what she needed. When I make her wear her coat, she whines and complains about how hot she is, and can I turn on the A/C the whole time, the whole way we're going to school.

But I can provide her with an opportunity to be warm with a coat if she decides she's cold by bringing her coat with, instead of thinking I know better than she does. And if her choice ultimately doesn't work out very well for her, then that's a natural consequence for her. If I bring the coat, and she's really, really cold and uncomfortable, she learns that coats help you stay warm, and sometimes she might want to choose to wear a coat.

It doesn't figure me into the equation at all. It's really just her decision, and this ends up helping her to develop into an independent and self-reliant adult, which is what we all want for our children anyway. Right?

So my own clients struggle with similar issues. Right now, I've been coaching many of my clients on similar issues. And not just if they've lost a child, but after going through anything really difficult in their lives. Losing a parent, going through a relationship breakup, leaving a work environment that was really difficult, any of those.

They went through a really challenging and painful time in their lives, and they don't want to repeat that pain. So they tell themselves they can't go through something like that again, and in the process, create a lot of drama and live in other people's businesses and try to control other people

in the assumption that when they do that, they can make sure something bad won't happen again.

Unfortunately, we just don't have that power. So there's really no upside to thinking this way. It creates more emotional pain instead of sparing us emotional pain, which is what we think we're doing when we think that way. I'm going to repeat this because it's so huge. When we think we have this power, it creates more emotional pain instead of sparing us emotional pain, which is what we think we're doing, which is what we want.

If you find yourself repeating certain thoughts or beliefs to yourself, especially after you've been through a storm, take some time to do a thought download on them. Question them from a place of curiosity and interest and love and compassion for yourself and do models on those thoughts. Then decide if they really serve you, if you like the results that those thoughts create for you or not.

If you're going through a storm right now, all the more reason to question and evaluate the thoughts that keep coming up for you because over time, they'll develop into your new beliefs. Remember beliefs are just thoughts that you've thought so many times that you believe them.

If you can be intentional and deliberate about deciding which thoughts to believe, then you're gonna choose ones that serve you in the future in moving forward, which is gonna only benefit you in the long run.

Hopefully this is helpful for those of you who are still working through some difficult times or find that there's still those little seeds left over from those difficult times that keep coming up for you. Such good work to work through this and create so much peace, which is really what ultimately we want.

All right, you guys, have a fantastic wonderful week, and I'll talk to you next week. Take care. Bye-bye.

Outro:

Thanks for joining us on Weight Loss for Busy Physicians. Now take the next step and go to [KatrinaUbellMD.com](http://KatrinaUbellMD.com) to download just what you need, the Busy Doctor's Quick Start Guide to Effective Weight Loss. Join us again next week for more support to keep you in control and on the path to freedom around food.