



WEIGHT LOSS FOR BUSY PHYSICIANS

— with Katrina Ubell, MD —

You are listening to the Weight Loss for Busy Physicians Podcast, with Katrina Ubell, MD, Episode #83.

Katrina Ubell: Welcome to 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, so you can feel better and have the life you want. If you're looking to overcome your stress eating and exhaustion, and move into freedom around food, you're in the right place.

Katrina Ubell: Hello there. Welcome back to the podcast. I am so excited today, to be able to share another coaching call with you. These are so fun for me. And it's so fun for me to know that you all are kind of the fly on the wall, listening in as we're doing this. Today's call is with Lisa, and she had some really, really great questions. She wanted to know how to apply the model when she just really, really wanted to eat something. She could see how it applied in so many other ways with her thinking, and she just could not figure out how to make this work for her, in terms of getting her to not eat something when she really, really wanted to eat it.

She also had some questions, a little bit, about accountability, and how to be accountable to herself. So we delve really deep into that, in this call. And if you are somebody who has struggled with applying the model,

this thought model, to your actual eating, you are not going to want to miss this episode. This is really, really good stuff. And this is really the true fundamentals for how you stop going against yourself, and eating against your own will. That's what we're talking about today. So please enjoy this coaching call with Lisa.

All right. Hi Lisa, how are you?

Lisa: I'm great. How are you?

Katrina Ubell: I am good. We are so excited to do this coaching call.

Lisa: Me too.

Katrina Ubell: And so we talked a little bit about. And we decided to talk a little bit more the model first, and how you can use the model to help you to not eat when you really wanna eat in the moment. Right?

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Right. So give me an example of where this has come up for you, where ... Like what you told me was, "I feel like the model has helped me in so many areas of my life, I just am having trouble applying it to this part." So tell me a little bit more about that.

Lisa: Well, I definitely have a sweet tooth. And anytime there's a candy bowl, and I walk past it, I wanna take a handful. Or if there's dessert, you know, I don't need it because I'm full. But I need it because it's there. For instance, or if I know that I have a plate of cookies on the counter, and I'm upstairs in my bedroom, it's almost like those cookies are calling my name and won't stop until I go down and have one, or the whole plate.

And for a while, I might try to think about using the model, and I just can't wrap my head around how to get into it so that I can really control myself. And usually, the cookies

win, so I don't know exactly. I'd love to dig into that deeper.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. Or the bowl of candy. Yeah.

Lisa: Yes. Uh-huh.

Katrina Ubell: So when the cookies are down there, what we have a tendency to think is that there's no thoughts going on. Like we just have desire. But there's always a thought there. And so, what are the thoughts ... It's probably a lot of chatter actually, right? You're upstairs. The cookies are downstairs. And they're talking to you. I've totally used the exact same terminology, right? They're just like, "Come one." So what are the thoughts that are going on in your head, when that's happening?

Lisa: Just how good they would taste. That if I don't eat them, someone else is going to get them before I can. That I probably won't make cookies for a long time. And also the scarcity concept. "These might be the last homemade cookies I get for a while, so I better stock up." But mainly just how good they would taste.

Katrina Ubell: How good they would taste. Yeah. And this is the think that I think is actually really helpful to understand, is it doesn't have to be some deep, dark secret thought. It really can just be, "Those would taste good," or, "I want that."

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Right? "I want to eat that."

Lisa: I mean, I love cookies, and I love chocolate.

Katrina Ubell: "I love cookies. I love chocolate." Right. And even the thought, "I have a sweet tooth," it seems like you're just telling me, "No, I'm just letting you know a fact about me." But that is a thought. That's a way that you describe yourself, that fuels the story about, "If there's a candy

bowl, I can't just walk past it. I have to eat it. If there's cookies downstairs, and I'm upstairs, I can't stop thinking about them." These are all thoughts. And I think you're, "No, but like really that would be a circumstance. I have a sweet tooth."

Lisa: The other thing is, when I was stressed out about not being able to find a computer with a camera on it, I was like, "I know my friend Kelly has M&Ms in her office. I'm just gonna go find some M&Ms before I try to solve this problem." It's like, "Those M&Ms are just gonna relieve my stress."

Katrina Ubell: Right. Right. And that really is just a habit. It's like, "Oh, I'm feeling this uncomfortable emotion." Because what you were talking about is, there was a little change of plan as we were heading into this call, and you were trying to get it all sorted out. And so you were a little stressed about it. And so, what you normally do when you feel that emotion is, you eat something sweet. And it really does make you feel better. That's the thing. Right?

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: You feel the little dopamine hit, and it really does calm you down. Like, "Okay. Now I'm ready to solve a problem because I just had some M&Ms."

Lisa: Right. That's exactly how it feels.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. So the awareness of this is the first big part of this. Okay? So just recognizing, "I have a sweet tooth," is a thought. The reason you have such desire and over-desire to eat candy and cookies is because of the thought, "They'll taste good. I really want that. That would be delicious right now. I like chocolate. I like cookies." You know, things like that.

So all of those things are thoughts, and we put those on "T" line in the model. So just going back to the cookie example, let's just put those into a model. So the

circumstance, the the neutral fact is "cookies in your house." Right? We can all agree there are cookies in your house. And then your thought is, "They'll taste good." How do you feel when you think, "They'll taste good"? What emotion do you have?

Lisa: Excitement.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. And then what do you do?

Lisa: I go eat them.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lisa: And then-

Katrina Ubell: Then the result for you is they tasted good. Right?

Lisa: Right. Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: But, you also-

Lisa: Then I feel guilty because I ...

Katrina Ubell: Yes.

Lisa: I didn't hold myself accountable, and-

Katrina Ubell: -going against your plan.

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Lisa: "Why can't I ever do anything right?"

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. So that's actually the model that comes right after this model. So in that moment when you go, "They'll taste good. I'm excited," that drives you take the cookie and eat it, in that moment, there was nothing wrong with that, right? It tasted good. But then, maybe a split second later, maybe a minute later, maybe an hour later, there come

your thoughts of, "I shouldn't have eaten those. Why can't I control myself?" And other thoughts, right? So what are those thoughts then?

Lisa: Well, the thought would be, "I feel too full. I really wanna lose weight. And I can't ever do what I know I need to do, to do that. Maybe I should just quit trying to lose weight and just eat all the cookies I want all the time." But mainly like, "I know what needs to be done, and I'm just not doing it."

Katrina Ubell: Okay. All right. So let's choose that last one. So that last thought ... And really, you could choose any of these thoughts. And I just want you know that, and anyone listening, you're giving me now another little mini-thought download of what your thoughts are right after you've eaten it, okay? And it's not like you have to find the best thought or any of that. I'm just picking one, just to pick one.

So the one I'm picking is, "I know what to do, and I'm just not doing it." And so the circumstance here is that you ate, you know, how many cookies would you say? Let's just-

Lisa: Four.

Katrina Ubell: Four. Okay. So ate four cookies. And then your thought is, "I know what to do, and I'm just not doing it." And then what's your feeling when you think that thought?

Lisa: Guilt, or failure.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. And then what do you do when you feel guilty, or like a failure?

Lisa: I beat myself up.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Anything else?

Lisa: I'm pretty good about beating myself up.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah?

Lisa: Because, I mean, that's mainly what I do.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Do you sometimes eat more cookies?

Lisa: Oh, probably, yeah. Because I've already messed up. Why not just eat more?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. Right? Isn't that so fascinating?

Lisa: Yeah. Uh-huh.

Katrina Ubell: Because then you're feeling guilty, and like failure, which feels terrible. And then you're beating yourself up, which makes you feel even worse. So then how, in your brain, how does your brain make you feel better?

Lisa: And then I promise myself, "Well, I'll just start over tomorrow. So then maybe I should go have more cookies, or find something else I know tomorrow I won't be allowed to have because I'm starting over."

Katrina Ubell: Right, right. So then the result, just to finish this model out, if the action is beating yourself up and eating more cookies, then the result is you just are not doing it. Right? You're really doing the exact opposite of what it is that you need to do to get what you want. Yeah. So are you starting to see how you can use the model, like in this kind of scenario? So this is just to understand what you're doing now.

Lisa: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: But how do we use it, then, to help you change?

Lisa: Right. Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Right. So the first issue here is your willingness to feel a negative emotion, or an uncomfortable emotion. And this is complicated a little bit by your over-desire for sugar and

flour based foods. So what happens in your brain when you eat flour and sugar on a regular basis is, because they're so concentrated, and they release such a dopamine hit, your brain evolutionarily has been trained to place an inordinate amount of emphasis on those foods. Because way, way, way, way, way back, when maybe trees were having fruit ... You know, apples were ripe, or there were wild berries places, or things like that, that sweetness was pretty unusual for us, as humans.

And then the brain was like, "Ooh, that sweetness was good. You should definitely eat more of that," because you need to kind of gain some weight in the summer, so you make it through the winter. I mean really, when food was scarce, you needed to have some stores. And what has now happened for us, as humans, is that that sweetness is so concentrated and so ridiculously overly available. Like, it's everywhere, right? You can have it anytime you want. And our brains have not evolved, or adapted, to know what to do with that intense dopamine hit.

So the brain's like, "Oh, way more dopamine? Way more important. For sure, you really need to do that." And to get you to do that, it creates this desire, this urge. This feeling of, "I can't stop thinking about the cookies. I need to go have the cookies." It's like you can't rest until the loop is closed. You know, like, "I want cookies. Until I eat the cookies, my brain will not rest."

And then it starts the next cycle, of beating yourself up, and feeling bad, and then feeling those emotions that don't feel good. And then that's the emotional eating component of, "I don't feel good about myself, so the way I feel good is I eat some more food. Right? So interesting to see this.

So the desire is created by the brain overemphasizing this importance of these foods. But it's also created by your thinking. Right? Because have you ever seen a cookie

that you just thought looked gross, or had something in it that you don't like?

Lisa: Oh, yeah. Definitely.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah? Right? Like there might be some ingredient in it that you're just like-

Lisa: Like coconut or something.

Katrina Ubell: -not a fan of that or something? Right. Why is that cookie different than one that you do like? They're both cookies. The only difference is what your thought are about it. Like, "I like the ingredients in this one. I don't like the ingredients in that one." And so your desire for the one that you like the ingredients in, is way higher than the one that you don't.

Or, say, here's an example for me. I have never liked pudding. I am not a pudding person. I remember as a kid thinking, "I should like pudding. Kids like pudding." And every time I tasted it, I was like, "This is not good. I don't like this." So pudding has no impact on me. I can have pudding around me all day long, I'm like, "Nah. Just really not that interested." Right?

But then there might be some other food that is also just as sweet, that I have so much more desire for. And the difference is my thinking about it. So the part that your brain creates, with the over-emphasis on the sugar, the way that you reduce that is by taking a break from eating that all the time. And that means letting your brain create these urges, and create this desire, and going, "Yep, I'm really feeling that right now, and I'm going to let myself feel it, and not close that loop. Because every time I eat it, I re-emphasize to the brain this important, and the brain will actually ..." This is neuroplasticity, right? The brain will reduce its desire for this if you don't keep closing the loop by eating the food.

So that requires some commitment, to going like, "Yeah, I'm willing to really want this sugar and not eating it because I know the long term gain is gonna be so important for me. But at the same time, managing your thinking. Because if you're trying to not eat the sugar, you're trying to not eat the cookies while going, "Oh my gosh, but I won't be able to have them again for a long time. And oh, they would taste so amazing. And they smell so good. And how come everyone else gets to eat them. And, ugh, those dumb naturally thin people. They can eat all the cookies they want, and they don't gain any weight. This is just not fair at all. I should definitely be able to eat this, right?"

Lisa: Oh, yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Your brain is creating so much desire with your thinking, that allowing that urge becomes so much more difficult.

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Right? Versus just managing your thinking and deciding how you wanna think about the fact that you have a lot of desire. That your brain's creating a lot of that desire for you. So let's play around with that idea. So there's cookies in the house. You've made a commitment to yourself that you're not gonna eat these cookies. The desire is definitely there. Right? The thoughts are coming.

I always think of them as ... Like you know when we watch the lottery on TV? They show the lottery, and they have all the balls flying around the air blower and everything. And then they just press a button and one of those balls pop up? You know, and they're like, "That's the number," or whatever. I think of that like thoughts in our brain, you know? It's like, "Oh, this is a thought. You're never gonna be able to eat a cookie ever again, so you absolutely have to eat this one."

Like ... brain? That's the best one you got for me today? Okay. You know. So your brain is popping up those little

lottery balls, all of these thoughts. That's your primitive brain offering that up to you. And then you have your pre-frontal cortex, that supervising mothers going, "No, but I made the decision I'm not going to eat the cookie."

So now we have to figure out what is the thought that's gonna keep you on that path, for what you want. Okay? So the way that we can actually do this model is bottom up. So we know what result we want, right? It's very clear. You want the result of not eating the cookie. Following your plan. So that is really easy. So we can start there. And in order ... Actually, you know what? That is actually the "action" line, now that I write that down.

So that is the "action" line. So the action you wanna take is actually inaction. We want to not eat the cookie. We wanna follow your plan, and manage your mind so it's probably not like a horrible experience. So I'll write, "Manage your mind." Right. And then what's the result for you, if you don't eat the cookie, follow your plan, and manage your mind?

Lisa: Then I feel good, that I'm in control. I feel like I'm in control. Maybe lose some weight. Or at least eat healthier.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, moving forward towards your goal.

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. And one thing that I always come back to too is, then you're really living in integrity with yourself.

Lisa: Right. I have a...

Katrina Ubell: Right? Because you made a decision. You promised yourself something, and you kept your promise to yourself. Right, so you're living in integrity. And that is, I think, when we really, really look at overeating and this whole weight struggle, that is one of the reasons it feels so bad. Especially for us as physicians, right? We're

smart people. We're so accountable, and follow-through, and live in high integrity in so many areas, and why in this one area do we not follow through, right?

So knowing how good it feels when you're living in integrity. When you say you're gonna call a family, you call them. Right? Or a patient, or whatever, right? You aren't just like, "I don't know. I just really wanted to eat cookie. So I didn't." Right? You would never do that. So living that result of living in integrity with yourself, is really what you want, ultimately?

So now we know that. So the result we want is being in control, moving forward toward your goal, and living in integrity with yourself. The action is not eating the cookie, following your plan, and managing your mind. So if you're gonna do those things, what emotion would drive that? How would you feel?

Lisa: To get myself to do those things, how do I need to feel?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Lisa: In control, or ... Yeah, in control. That I am controlling the situation, not the cookies.

Katrina Ubell: Mm-hmm (affirmative). Okay. Great. So our circumstance is, "Cookies in the house. Cookies not on food plan." Right?

Lisa: Yeah.

Katrina Ubell: Those are both things that we can agree on. And we could agree on that, if you had that all laid out. So then what we're looking for is a thought that feels true and believable to you, that makes you feel in control, so that you don't eat the cookie, and follow your plan, you manage your mind, and then get the results of moving forward towards your goal, living in integrity with yourself. So can you think of a thought that would create that feeling?

Lisa: A thought that would make me feel in control ... A random thought would be, "I want to be healthier," or, "I don't need the cookie," or, "This cookie is not going to help me achieve my goal." Something like that.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Yeah. For sure. That, for sure, can do it. Now here's the thing. "I wanna be healthier," sounds great. And in the moment, your brain's gonna be like, "Screw health. That sounds terrible. You can get healthy tomorrow. Because today there's cookies."

Lisa: Right, exactly. I've already tried this.

Katrina Ubell: Right? And so it's really good to recognize that. Doesn't mean that there's anything wrong with your brain, or you, or something fundamentally wrong with you. It's just that your brain, that primitive brain's just gonna be more screaming at you like, "No, but I'm quite sure that cookies really are that important right now. I really think you need to have them."

Lisa: Right. "You can be healthy tomorrow, when there aren't cookies here."

Katrina Ubell: Right. Right. Tomorrow, then you'll really feel sad. Right?

Katrina Ubell: Uh-huh.

Lisa: "If you just get rid of these cookies, it's so much easier to be healthy."

Katrina Ubell: Exactly. Right? "And the only way to get rid of them is to eat them, of course."

Lisa: Right.

Katrina Ubell: So one thing that ... Let's just play with this a little bit. And I certainly am not telling you how to think. This is up to you, to come up with what you think is gonna work. And then what you do is you take a thought that you think's ... that's gonna work, and then you do what we say, "Trying

it on." It's sort of like trying on clothes. You actually are in that situation, you try that thought, and see if it works.

But one thing that I think can be really helpful when you're having a lot of desire for something, but ultimately want to not eat it, is recognizing the desire. Right? Saying, "Of course you want the cookie. Of course I wanna eat the cookie. And it's okay that I wanna eat the cookie. But I'm not gonna eat the cookie today." It can be something as simple as that. Just recognizing it. Not resisting that desire, and thinking it shouldn't be there. Now, over the course of time, the more times the cookie's there and you have the desire, and you don't meet it with a cookie, the desire does go down, and it goes away.

But in the moment, you're feeling intense desire. "I really wanna eat that cookie, and it really seems like it's the solution right now." But maybe, "I wanna stay in integrity with myself." Or, "I'm working on being in control of my thoughts, feelings, and actions." You know, there's lots of different days of thinking about this. "I'm feeling a lot of desire for the cookie, and that's okay. Meaning, it's okay to have the desire, allowing the desire. Not thinking that, "I can't feel it. I have to make it go away with the food."

Lisa: That ... Okay. Something that you've said somewhere has resonated with me, as far as stress goes. Because whenever I get stressed, I reach for the candy or cookies or whatever. And I try to stop myself and say, "Okay. It's okay to feel stressed. Just feel the emotion and get it over with." And I never thought to do that with a desire. "Just feel the desire, work your way through it, and get over it."

Katrina Ubell: Right. Right. Yeah, and learning how to feel that, for those of us who overeat, is for real a skill that we have not ever tried. Or the only time you do it is when the food isn't around, or you're in a procedure, you really can't do it. And then your thinking's a little bit different anyway. But feeling the desire when the food is there, and not eating it, is something you can really get good at.

Sometimes I'll think that to myself like, "I'm getting really good at feeling rejected today. Or I'm getting really good at feeling desire for food that I'm not gonna eat today." It's so much more neutral, just telling myself that story rather than, "Poor me. Why do I have to have this metabolism? It's not fair." You know?

Lisa: Yeah. Okay. This is really helping. Thank you.

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, you're absolutely welcome. This is how you can really apply this model to literally anything. So this is such a great way, especially when you're like, "I don't even know what to think. All I know is I just have the lottery balls full of reasons why I should eat the cookie flying around. So you come up with your thought. So let's just finish this model. What is the thought that you wanna try the next time this happens?"

Lisa: "It's okay to have the desire to eat the cookie. But you don't have to eat the cookie."

Katrina Ubell: Yeah. Okay.

Lisa: "Okay to feel desire, and not do it."

Katrina Ubell: Yeah, and not act on it. Yeah.

Lisa: Act on it.

Katrina Ubell: Okay. So this is what's gonna happen. So we do this work now, when you don't have a cookie in front of you. And you're like, "Yes. For sure, this is what I'm gonna do next time there's a cookie. And it's gonna be amazing. And I'm gonna be a complete badass. And this is the solution." And then the cookie's ... If you're anything like me, at least, the cookie's gonna come around, and your brain's gonna completely forget everything we just did, okay?

Your brain's gonna just be like, "Nope. We're blocking that." So what really honestly needs to happen, is you need to write this down for yourself, and remind yourself

of it. Sometimes, what I'll have my clients do is literally go and bake cookies, to have them in front of them, so that they can practice this. You know? To create the situation for themselves, and then practice throwing them all away, or something that feels really uncomfortable.

Lisa: Well, we got new neighbors. And my husband's like, "Oh, we need to bake them something, and take it to them to meet them." So I have ...

Katrina Ubell: Right? And what I used to do is be like, "Well, we'll bake them a dozen, and of course we'll bake ourselves a dozen as well. Because, I mean, if we're doing it, why not?" Right? And in this case, you can just bake two dozen, give them all to them, and practice feeling that desire and not having any left over. Or watching everyone else ... you know, watching your husband eat them? Sometimes it's really good to kind of put yourself in that sort of lion's den position, to practice this. To go, "Does that work? What do I need to do?"

Eventually, I want you to be able to be around the cookies and go like, "Who cares? It doesn't even matter." I mean, you care about it, but you're not there yet. And that's completely fine. And this is just all part of the practice of going like, "I wanna get to that point, where like I say, it's like an onion on the counter. It's like, "It's a cookie." It's like, "Mm. Just not that interested. It probably tastes good." But I'm like, "Whatever. It's not that big of a deal to me."

But the way that you get there is by practicing this, letting yourself have that urge and that desire, and not meeting it. And then reminding yourself of this. Now sometimes, it gets to a point where you're like, "Okay. I'm out. I've been doing this for five minutes. And I'm either gonna eat that cookie or something else needs to happen." And then maybe go for a walk outside, or you go do something different, listen to some music, or just kind of get your mind off of it. But then you know for five minutes, you

allowed that urge, and you still didn't eat the cookie. And that is huge. That's huge progress.

And then you practice it again, and you practice it again. Okay?

Lisa: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: And it might even be, if it's like the M&Ms in someone's office, or something like that, where you're like, "Okay, I'm gonna practice going into her office and talking to her, and not grabbing M&Ms. And then I'm gonna leave. And I'm gonna for sure feel like I'm missing out on something." Because it's just pattern recognition. Your brain's like, "Remember? This is what we do. When we're in her office, this is what we do."

And instead, you're like, "Oh no, but I'm just changing that. That's not what I'm gonna do anymore. And I'm willing to feel this uncomfortable desire while I'm changing that for myself. So what we often think is that there's no thought. A lot of times when people tell me that they do some binge eating, they say there's no thought at all. They don't have a thought. "I just eat."

But there is a thought. And the thought really can just be, "I wanna eat more food. What else can I eat? I want to feel fuller?" I mean, it really can be just as simple as that. And we think we're just like, "No, that's just the honest truth. That's not a thought." But it is a thought. And it's a thought that creates desire that drives the acton of eating that food.

Lisa: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: Really interesting, right? How that kind of all plays out? So I also like to just think about having some compassion for yourself, as you're going through this process. This is hard. This is hard work that the vast majority of people don't sign up for. Right? Because they're like, "That sounds terrible. I think I might just sign up for the latest

weight loss shake thing, or take some pills or something, and hope that that's gonna work." They aren't really willing to do this part of the work. But this is everything. Seriously, this ... If you had no desire for cookies, would it be hard to not eat a cookie?

Lisa: No, no not at all.

Katrina Ubell: Right? So it's like, "Oh, then maybe the solution is reducing the desire. And maybe I have a lot of control over that, by choosing what I think. And if that's the case, and this is the work I have to do, to not be so consumed by eating sugar all the time ... Huh. Interesting. Maybe I'm willing to sign up for that."

Lisa: Definitely.

Katrina Ubell: Right? I mean, this is the really good stuff here.

Lisa: It is. Yeah. So you were talking earlier about just not eating sugar for a while. So I tried that, and actually I know that it does work. And then I fall off the wagon, so to speak, and then never get back on. But do you look at added sugar in foods, and artificial sugars, and that also? And flour. Usually, I just say, "Okay, I'm gonna stop buying soda. And I'm gonna stop just concentrated carbs, any kind of bad stuff." Then I do lose the desire for it. Okay, so I just answered my own question. Nevermind.

Katrina Ubell: Well no, finish it up because someone listening might be like, "Wait, what was she gonna say?"

Lisa: Well, I was gonna say do you read labels and look for added sugar in everything? And just, if it has added sugar, try not to eat it? But, I mean, for me, usually when I'm cutting out everything I know I shouldn't eat, it really doesn't ... Then I don't even look at labels because I know. I know what I shouldn't...

Katrina Ubell: Because you already know. Yeah, so I mean, first of all, so much food that's processed is gonna have a lot of

sugar in it. It's just kind of the tail end, or the result of the whole low fat thing. And now, all of our taste buds are so used to sweets, or some sweetness, or lack of acidity, or things like that, that they're just adding sugar to everything. The reason they started adding so much sugar was because when they took the fat out of all the food, it tasted terrible. So if you can't have fat to make it taste good, then why don't we add sugar?

So now there's added sugar to so many things. But when you really constrain your food, the foods that you eat, which is one of the things that I teach, then you just find a few things that are on your plan, that don't have the sugars, and you just eat them again and again. And when you're not looking for a lot of entertainment out of your food, and a lot of variety, and all of that, then it doesn't really matter. Right? You're just like, "Yeah, I just eat this. And it taste good. Is it the most mindblowing thing I've ever eaten? No. And that's exactly the point." Right? "The point is I'm fueling my body with food that taste good and nourishes me. And I don't have to think that it was the most amazing meal I've ever eaten."

It doesn't mean that your food doesn't taste good. It means that it's not like, "Oh my gosh, you know what we need to do? We need to go to that place, and we need to get that amazing thing. And I heard that that new place that opened is so great, and we absolutely have to go there, and ..." You know what I mean? Where you get super excited and you're getting so much of your entertainment in your life, and excitement in your life, out of your food? You wanna keep it very boring. Very, very boring. Like, "This is just what I eat, over and over again."

Now, most salad dressings will have ... even the fatty ones, will have a little added sugar. Like ranch dressing usually has at least a little bit, unless you make it yourself. And we have to make this super easy. I want you to be able to go to the hospital cafeteria, or a grocery store that has a salad bar, and be able to make yourself a salad and

use their dressings and have it be fine. When you think about ranch dressing, it doesn't taste sweet. So if you're out and about, and that's what they have, you don't need to go crazy. This is your B-minus work, right? You're not like, "I can't eat anything because there might be the slightest little whatever added."

You have the ranch dressing in the restaurant, or wherever you are. But when you're eating at home, which, you know, a lot of us eat the majority of our meals there, or at least prepare them there. Sure, it makes sense for you to pay attention and pick one that's lower in sugar, or has the sugar way lower in the ingredients list, and then choosing something like that.

But I wanted to speak your diet soda. You know, there are definitely some people who think, who say and speculate that the non-caloric sweeteners can increase your insulin levels, which can put you into more of that storage mode. The jury's kind of out on that being a definitive fact. For sure, it happens. But what we do know is that when you consume something that tastes sweet, it fuels your desire for sweetness.

Katrina Ubell: Right? And I know that for myself too, having been on and off it over the years. I don't ever drink it anymore because it just doesn't serve me. And I don't want to deal with the aftermath of having to deal with then having that sweet taste, and wanting more sweets. And I just don't even think about it if I'm not drinking that. And so that can be ...

Because if you think about it, right, how come everybody drinks diet soda and then still gains weight? It might make you hungrier. There's a lot of things that it might do, and we don't know about that. But what we do know for sure, is it makes you want more sweet things. So that's not helping you then. That's for sure not helping with the over-desire. You know?

Lisa: So can I ask you something?

Katrina Ubell: Yeah.

Lisa: What, then, do you ... Like tonight, we're going over to some friends' house. And I don't really wanna drink beer. But I don't wanna just say, "Okay, I'll just have water," when everyone else is drinking something. What can I... Then I was like, "Well, if I pour some diet Dr. Pepper in cup and pretend to put a little Fireball in it, it looks like I'm drinking something, and I'm not." And it's harmless. If I'm just drinking water, then ... You know. I get comments, or people are like, "Oh, she's uptight." You know. And I'm not.

Katrina Ubell: Well, so first of all it's our thoughts about what other people are thinking about us. Because usually, what we're thinking ... Right? We're thinking they're thinking about us, that we're uptight. Right? But that's actually our judgment of ourselves. Most people are not coming up to you and going like, "Are you uptight?"

Lisa: People will come up and say, "Oh, are you pregnant?"

Katrina Ubell: Right.

Katrina Ubell: There is that. You don't wanna deal with the pregnancy questions. But even regardless, sometimes we just prefer not to drink. Right? And it doesn't have to be a whole story of, "Well, I'm trying to lose weight. And I'm trying to this and that and the other thing." Sometimes you can just say, "I just prefer not to," or, "Sometimes I like to not do that." Some of my clients who take call, will love being on call. Sometimes they're like, "It's such a good out. You know? I don't have to explain myself. I can just say that."

Sometimes, what I have done is, I've done the fake drinking, which I ... When I was pregnant, I took great pride in being an amazing fake drinker. Totally making people think I was drinking. They had no idea. And swapping drinks out with my husband, and then them having to like ... So that sometimes ... That was just something fun to do. Of course, don't have to do that.

But what I do for myself, because there are definitely times ... Like I have alcohol in my protocol, and if I wanna have it, I will have it. But I rarely, rarely have it. And so there are definitely times, like say I go to someone's house, or I'm at restaurant, and I'm thinking, "I just kind of want a little bit more of a special drink," there are things that I do, or that I ask for, that do feel a little bit more than just plain tap water. And for me, that's sparkling water. So Pellegrino is great. A lot of restaurants have that. If they don't have that, they for sure have club soda. Because any place that has soda on a fountain, on a gun kind of thing, they can always just give you the soda water.

And then I like getting lemon and lime wedges. So in a nice restaurant, I'll even put that in a wine glass. And nice lemon and lime, it's a beautiful glass, and a nice sparkling water, Pellegrino, it tastes good. And that's enough for me, than just, "No, water's good." You know. Which is ... water is totally fine. You absolutely could just do water. But you might, also ... Sometimes, I've had clients who have gone to someone's house and have brought over LaCroix. You know? A case of LaCroix. Or a little six pack or something, of some sort of flavored sparkling water, if they really like that. Just so they feel like they've got something that they're holding, if everybody else is kind of holding something.

So those can be options too. What you have to do, is you kind of have to experiment with just trying different things and seeing. And you might be like, "Nobody even noticed. Nobody even paid any attention." But the only way you know is if you try it. And then just be really aware. Like, "I wonder what people will think, and what they'll say," rather than going, "I know they're gonna be thinking such weird things about me." Like, "No, you're thinking weird things about you." That's your thought that you're putting on them, your judgment about you that you think they're thinking about you. Right?

So practicing that. And then, another great thing to do is to observe people who don't drink, or who aren't drinking. You know? And maybe where you're going, there won't be anybody. So maybe this time won't be a time that it's a good idea to do that. But when you go different places, and there's someone who's not drinking, paying attention. Or paying attention to someone who's naturally thin, and how she responds, how she shows up with that. Like you might notice that she takes three sips of her beer, and then loses interest. You know?

And it's really interesting, really fascinating to spend sometime just observing. You're like an anthropologist. This unique culture that you've just discovered, of the naturally thin people. How are they showing up in a social situation like that? Now, if this is someone who gets totally raging drunk and then binges on food and then doesn't eat for three days, that's not who we're talking about, okay? We're really talking about somebody who just doesn't have any problem with this at all? How does she show up at a party like this? And then you can try it. You know?

Sometimes what I'll do ... So I just in Europe for two weeks with my family. And I'm not a huge beer drinker. But we were in Germany and Austria. And I was kind of like, "I'd like to kind of try it." But a whole beer really fills me up so much, I don't really like it. I don't like how I feel after having that. So what, instead, I did was, a few times when my husband got a beer, I just had one sip of his. And that was all I needed. I just wanted to know what it tasted like, and that was it. I didn't need more. So that can be a way of doing it. You know, just going like, "Okay, I'm just gonna try that. And then I'm gonna have this thing instead."

So a lot of it comes down to we want to have someone just tell us what we should do, and what's gonna work. But what works for you may be totally different than someone else. And so that's being open to just figuring

out what your protocol is. What is Lisa's way of dealing with these things, that works with your thinking, your family, our life, your friends, all of those things. How do you wanna approach the holidays in the framework within which you celebrate the holidays? You know what I mean? And just trying different things. And being willing to fail. Right?

Lisa: I'm good at that.

Katrina Ubell: But being willing to fail and go, "Oh, that didn't work. I'm not gonna do that again. But I am gonna spend some time thinking about why it didn't work. Where I went wrong ... You know, maybe you're like, "Well, I'm just gonna have one beer and then I won't have more." And then what ended up happening was, was after one beer, you were already feeling a little buzzed. And then, of course, you made that decision. So, and then you need to hold yourself to it. "Okay, interesting, so maybe a half a beer is what I should try next time." Or, "Maybe I should just try not having a beer. It can be just as fun. What might that be like?" And trying it out, you know?

So those are all ways of kind of figuring that out. But for me, the sparkling water works great. I will tell you another tip that is actually ... I believe it comes from Alcoholics Anonymous. But it really can work well if you're gonna be around people who are really big drink pushers. And we know those people who are like, "Why aren't you drinking?" You know, like it's important to them that you're having a good time. And if you don't have an alcoholic beverage in your hand, then they assume you're not having a good time.

And so the way that you approach this is, you get there, and they immediately offer you a drink. And you go, "Oh, you know what? I'm just gonna have a water. I'm just gonna have this first. I'm so thirsty. Before I have ... I'm gonna have that," whatever it is that they're offering you.

"For sure, I want some. But first, let me just drink this."
And they're like, "Okay, great. That sounds totally great."

And then later, they're like, "Oh, did you have one?" And you're like, "Oh yeah, you know what? It was amazing. But I'm great. I'm really just taking a break from that right now. I'm just drinking this right now." Because think of alcoholics, and how they have to go through all this stuff. Where they really are in sobriety. They're not having it. And they really don't necessarily wanna tell everybody that they're an alcoholic, and why. Right? So it can be just this sort of little bit of a game sometimes. You know, if that feels good to you.

You also can totally just straight up be like, "No, I'm not drinking today. Because I don't want to." That's totally fine too. But sometimes it can just be like, "Oh yeah, I'm good. Yeah, it was amazing. No, I'm great with this right now." And they're like, "Okay." They just want you to have a good time. And you're just reassuring them, "Yes, I am having a good time. Thank you so much for caring about me." But don't actually have to consume the alcohol-

Lisa: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: -to have a good time.

Lisa: Thank you. Yeah, that's all good ideas.

Katrina Ubell: So those are all good ideas. So the final thing, let's kind of just tie this up. Because you did talk a little bit also about accountability to yourself. And there was this recent podcast about that, being accountable to yourself. And really what ... I'll just leave you with a little nugget about that. What it really comes down to is being willing to feel uncomfortable. Because being accountable to yourself means not acting in the moment on every little whim like, "You should get the M&Ms, or you should have have the cookie." And not eating the cookie is going to only happen if you allow yourself to feel the discomfort of having the desire and urge and not meeting it.

But then, what do you get after that? Feel amazing. Right? And you're building that relationship with yourself, where you're like, "Oh, wait. I was just accountable to myself. Turns out I can do this. Sweet. I wonder if I can do it two times in a row." And then you do that. And then you start building that up. Now, are there gonna be times where you're like, "Shoot, I totally screwed that up?" Sure. Then you get to decide what to make that mean.

Lisa: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: Like, "I'm just gonna start again. Clearly, now I know where I still have work to do. Okay good." Versus, "This isn't gonna work. I knew I wasn't gonna be able to do this." Thoughts like that.

Lisa: Okay.

Katrina Ubell: Okay? So food for thought ... No pun intended. Sorry. But your new thought, right? "It's okay to have the desire, and not act on it." Want you to give that one a try, okay?

Lisa: Definitely.

Katrina Ubell: I always say, "You gotta try this one out in the wild." Okay? You gotta go out in the wild of your real life, not in fairy coaching land, and give it a try, and see what happens. And then you for sure have to email me and let me know how it goes.

Lisa: I got so many notes from this. Thank you so much.

Katrina Ubell: And the great news is, it's recorded. So you can listen to it all again, okay?

Lisa: Great. Thank you so much.

Katrina Ubell: You're so welcome, Lisa. And Lisa, thank you so much for raising your hand and letting everybody hear your coaching experience. This has been so helpful, I'm sure, for so many people.

Lisa: Thank you. It has been so helpful for me.

Katrina Ubell: Thanks for joining me today. If you like what you heard here, be sure to hit "subscribe" in your podcast app, so you never miss an episode. You can also get my Busy Doctor's Quick-Start Guide to Effective Weight Loss for free, by visiting me over at KatrinaUbellMD.com.