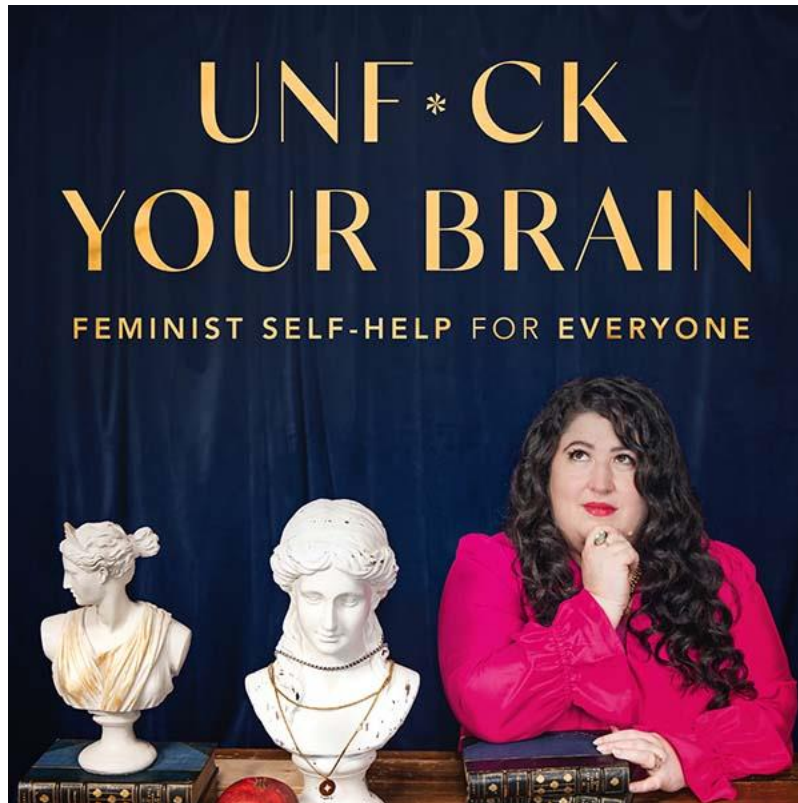


UFYB 341: What to Change Today to Change Your Actions Tomorrow (Feminist Mindset Principles Series Ep 7)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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How often have you vowed to do better next time? And then how often does that actually happen? Whether it's a screwup at work, a fight with a loved one or a falling down on your personal goals, it's tempting to just promise ourselves, we'll get it right next time, but this is a dangerous, dangerous habit. In this episode I'm going to tell you why we have a rule in my relationship that we never say, "I'll never do better next time." And why I recommend you adopt this rule for your whole life.

Welcome to *UnF*ck Your Brain*. I'm your host, Kara Loewentheil, Master Certified Coach and Founder of the *School of New Feminist Thought*. I'm here to help you turn down your anxiety, turn up your confidence and create a life on your own terms, one that you're truly excited to live. Let's go.

Hello my friends, welcome back to the podcast and to our Feminist Mindset Principles series. So today we're going to talk about how you can change the way you act or the way you aren't acting, how to start doing something you aren't, how to stop doing something you are doing, whatever you want to change in your behavior in any area of your life. I think wanting to change our behavior in some way is probably a universal human experience.

Sometimes we want to stop doing something we're doing. Maybe we are numbing out because we don't have other coping tools. Or maybe we keep agreeing to things we don't want to do because we can't stop people pleasing. Or maybe we want to stop yelling at our kids or our spouse. Sometimes we want to start doing something we aren't. We keep swearing we're going to start working out or we're going to launch that side hustle or going to go back to school, but it keeps just 'not happening'.

And we always vow we will get started, we will get our shit together, we will do better next time. When I first met my partner, every time I was upset or

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disappointed he would tell me that he was going to 'do better next time'. He was not yet on board with the whole my thoughts caused my feelings thing. But even when it came to changes that I also hoped he might make, I knew that doing it better next time was not going to happen. And that's not because I don't believe he's capable of change. He's someone who has changed an enormous amount in the time that I've known him.

But I know that he's not an exception to everything I know about human brains. He, like me and like everyone else I've ever coached and like you, cannot change his behavior just by thinking to himself, I'll do it differently next time/ But we all do this to some extent, we just hope we'll be different or promise ourselves we'll be different or vow to be different. And we just think that that's going to do something like it's a magical spell. It doesn't work because our behavior is caused by our emotions and our emotions are caused by our thoughts.

So telling yourself that you'll act differently next time, just acting differently somehow really means nothing in and of itself. It's an intention that's easy to have now and almost impossible to live up to if that's the only plan you have for change. When you vow to yourself that you'll act differently in the future, it's just a pleasant delusion. It allows you to feel better now without really costing anything because the difficult moment of actually acting different is off in the future.

But then the future moment comes and you end up acting the same damn way because you have not changed your thoughts or your feelings. Your thoughts create your emotions, your feelings, and your emotions drive your behavior, whatever you're doing and not doing. So the thoughts and the emotions are like the fuel for the car. If you don't change those, you're not going to end up anywhere different than you already have.

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Let's say what happens now is that your kid keeps doing something over and over, you told them to stop. And you start thinking, they never listen, my kid doesn't respect me and you feel angry and eventually you yell at them and then of course you feel bad. Just vowing not to yell next time is like just telling yourself, even though the same thing will definitely happen again, and I will have the same emotions. I will magically react differently to them next time. That's not going to happen. Why would it?

You've literally changed nothing about the thoughts and feelings that are driving the action. We know that when you have this thought and that feeling in reaction to this circumstance, you yell. If we haven't changed anything else, the circumstance isn't changing. Your kid's going to still not listen. Your thought and feeling haven't changed ahead of time because you're just telling yourself all that can be the same and I'll just magically produce a different action.

It's not any more effective than just saying, "I wish I will magically have different thoughts and feelings in the future." When we believe we have done something wrong, we feel shame. And so believing we will do it differently and telling ourselves that we'll be better next time, it gives us some relief from the shame. That's why we want mentally to jump to that place. We want to skip over the messy part where we have to figure out what is happening with us.

We just want to get to that place where we're already better, we're already perfect, we do it perfectly next time because that gives us some relief from the shame we're feeling now but that doesn't work. There is only one way to ensure that you actually act differently in the future. Can you guess what that is? Drum roll. The only way to ensure that you act differently in the future is to change your thoughts and feelings now. Did you get that right?

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If you said, think a different thought when it happens again, you only get partial credit because first of all, when are you coming up with that new thought, when you're triggered and activated and freaking out? When you already want to yell at your kids? When you are about to send the impulsive 17th text to the person ghosting you? When you're worried that your boss is mad at you and you're about to act really weird in a meeting? At that moment, you're not in your best mind.

Your brain is not ready to come up with an awesome new thought when you're in the moment of crisis. In that moment your brain is going to pull out the thought it's been using all along, which is going to cause the same feeling and action with which you are already too familiar. If you want to change how you act in the future, you have to change how you're thinking now. And first you have to actually look at what thoughts are causing your current behavior. We all want to skip this step.

We don't want to get down in the muck with what's actually happening in our brains because we are going to judge the shit out of ourselves. So we want to just mentally skip to the magical day where we totally act differently. But we have to get to know what thoughts and feelings are creating the actions that we want to change otherwise we have no hope of changing them.

So the first step is getting really honest with yourself about what you are thinking now. Let's say that the behavior you want to change is that you have an idea for a book you want to write, but you're not working on it. Your brain tells you that it's just that you're busy. You just haven't gotten around to it. You're always promising yourself, next week or next month will be different, but it never is. That's because you have not figured out what you are thinking right now that is producing the inaction of not writing.

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There's so many thoughts it could be. It's too hard. I won't be good and it won't be worth it. I might fail. People might not like it. I'm not a writer. I don't have any business thinking I can write a book. It will take too long. I don't know what to say. I don't know how. Could be all of those thoughts, could be something totally different. Every brain is different. But whatever it is, the way you are thinking now is causing the inaction of not writing.

So if you want to take different actions, you have to start changing your thoughts now. You can't wait until the next time you're supposed to sit down to write. You have to be working on them ahead of time. And you need to work backwards from what you want to do to how you would need to feel. So if you want to write a book, you're going to need to feel motivated or committed or inspired maybe, instead of avoidant, which is what you feel now.

If you want to stop yelling at your kids, you're probably going to need to feel calm instead of agitated. Either way, whether you want to start doing something or stop doing something, you have to work backwards from the actions you want to the feelings that would drive those actions to the thoughts that you have to think to create them.

If you want to feel committed to writing so that you actually write, your thought might need to be something like, as long as I write 100 words today, I succeeded. Or my only job is to write until the timer goes off. Or I'm writing this just for me and it doesn't matter what anyone else thinks. You will have to come up with a thought that actually works for you. And of course, when you read my book, *Take Back Your Brain* or you work with me inside the *Feminist Self Help Society*, you learn in detail how to come up with these new thoughts to believe.

But the important thing for the purpose of this episode is that you have to change the thought you're thinking and practice a new thought that will

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actually produce the feeling and the action that you want. If you want to feel calm so you don't yell at your kids, your thought might need to be something like, my kids can love and respect me and still not do what I say because humans don't like doing what other humans tell them to do. These are just examples I'm pulling out of my head, off the top of my head.

There's no correct thought for a specific feeling or action, but the thing you need to understand is that in order to change your behavior you have to change the way you are thinking. You cannot just vow to do better. You cannot just promise yourself to improve. You cannot just dream of being different and think that's going to happen. You can change anything in your life by changing your thoughts. And you can change almost nothing in your life without changing your thoughts.

So if you have had a lot of things you've wanted to change about yourself or your life, if you have patterns in your life or patterns in your relationship that keep repeating, you keep vowing you're going to react differently, but you don't and you feel bad about that. There's nothing to be ashamed of. This explains why that's happening. It's like someone gave you a car but didn't teach you how to drive it and just told you that, "Next time you'd know how to drive", but you don't know how. You haven't been taught. You haven't learned. You haven't practiced. There's no way you're going to be able to drive, at least not without destroying your car.

Changing your thoughts on purpose to create specific feelings and actions and outcomes and returns is a superpower and it's one you have to learn how to do. And then once you have learned it, then it all makes sense. You never just have to say, "I'll try to do better next time or I'll try to start that next week. I'll just try not to get upset next time. I'll just try not to get triggered. I just need to be more committed. I just need to be more disciplined. I just need to be more patient."

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None of those statements are creating discipline or motivation or patience or anything else. You have to learn how to diagnose the thought that you're actually thinking that's creating the action or inaction you don't want. And then you need to learn to replace that with a thought that will create the emotion and action that you do want. When you learn how to do that, you are able to properly diagnose why you're acting a certain way and properly plan how to change your thoughts to produce the change in actions that you want.

And that, my friend, is how you live a life on your own terms with no regrets because you know that anything you want to change, you know how. And anything you don't change your thoughts about isn't going to change. And that might be okay. You don't have to change everything. But you need to know how to actually change the things that really do matter to you. And the way that you change any action or inaction in your life is by changing the way that you think.

Have a beautiful week. I'll be back next week to talk about how we create returns in our lives, outcomes in our lives with the investment in our thoughts, feelings and actions. We're going to put this all together so you really understand how to create any outcome you want in your life. Stay tuned.

If you're loving what you're learning on the podcast, you have got to come check out the Feminist Self Help Society. It's our newly revamped community and classroom where you get individual help to better apply these concepts to your life, along with a library of next level blow your mind, coaching tools and concepts that I just can't fit in a podcast episode.

It's also where you can hang out, get coached, and nerd out about all things thought work and feminist mindset with other podcast listeners just like you and me. It's my favorite place on Earth and it will change your life, I

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guarantee it. Come join us at www.unfuckyourbrain.com/society. I can't wait to see you there.