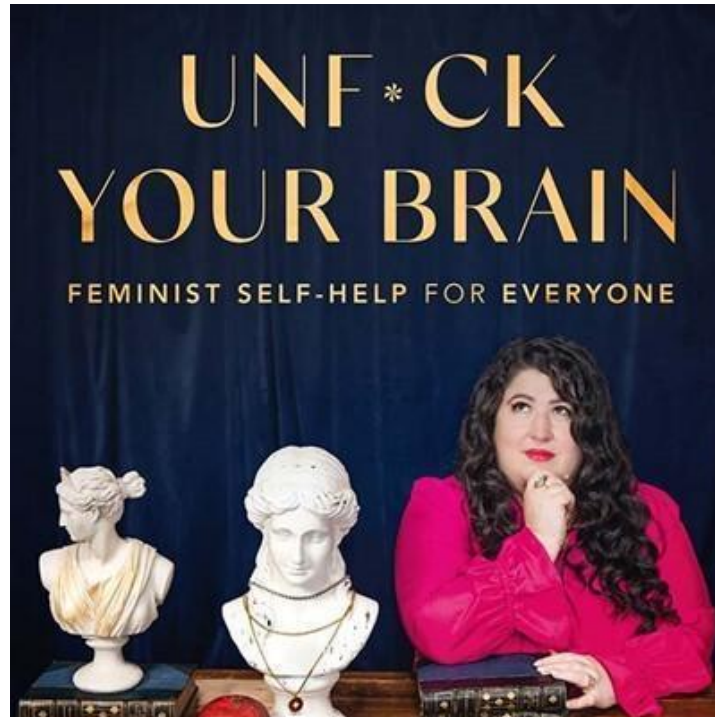


UFYB 22: Insight Vs. Transformation



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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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 chickens. I got very excited today because I was thinking about you guys and this podcast and I was like, we need like a nickname, like for the crew, even though the crew is like thousands of you. The crew, those of us who listen and do this work – and I was like, “What can I call them? They're a flock, they're chickens.” And then in my head I was like, oh, the Unfuck Flock.

I thought that sounded like an alliteration to my head, but then I said it out loud and I was like, no, that does not roll off the tongue. So I'm going to keep thinking about this. If you have any ideas, you know, email me. Tell me what you think.

I am a little bit buncy today; you can probably hear that. I'm not going to lie, I'm having a pretty fucking amazing day. We just wrapped up the Creating Confidence Challenge. This is the free five-day challenge that I ran last week, except I extended it over the weekend because I was having too much fun, so it was really a seven-day challenge.

And it was amazing. Don't be upset if you're listening to this and you're like, “What I missed the challenge?” Totally fine – I'm going to run it again in the future, probably in another few months or so; six months, maybe. So you'll definitely get another chance and I'll let you guys know when I do.

But this time was the first time I ran this particular challenge in this way and we had 750 people do it, which is like unbelievable. And people who were involved in the challenge just did such amazing work and had such brilliant breakthroughs. And I have to read to you what one of them wrote about her

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experience in the challenge because it just brought me to tears today. And I want to share it with you guys as a vision of what's possible.

And I feel I have to preemptively say, because so many of you are perfectionists, if you participated in the challenge and you didn't have this experience, that is okay. It doesn't mean anything about you or that anything went wrong. The person whose comments I'm about to read was really in the right place, had done a lot of pre-work before, had done some coaching before and she really, more importantly, went all in.

That's what I'm going to talk about more in a minute. So let me read you what she said. She said, "I have tried many different coaching models and therapies in my life. Trying to quiet the overwhelming anxious thoughts in my and the deep-seated but indefinable sense of dissatisfaction I had with my life and who I was. I was utterly motivated by getting away from the fear that my life wasn't good enough and I'd always thought that if I could just change the external circumstances of my life and find the thing, then I would feel better. The two major issues I had were health anxiety after a long and debilitating illness and a deep-seated belief that I was unlovable, leading to severe panic, loneliness and codependency. And they made me hypersensitive and controlling because I thought everyone was doing things for me because I wasn't good enough. The underlying root of all of this was a deep-seated lack of confidence in myself. Thoughts about my health, lack of love and lack of a full life, occupied 99% of my waking life and literally drove me to distraction making it impossible to concentrate or be present in my life."

So, I bet a lot of that sounds familiar to you guys. That's where she was before the challenge. And then this is what she said about the challenge.

"Kara showed me that this was the wrong way around and the first thing that needed to change was my thoughts and my beliefs. Her method was so easy and really resonated. There was no right or wrong or goal to be

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met. It was perfect for black and white thinkers like me. Once I started using the process, I started noticing changes to the way I felt straight away. I have been able to resolve both of these issues, the health and the feelings of codependency and unlovableness each within a matter of days. And now, I fully believe I'm well enough and good enough. My relationships have improved and I am no longer reading into things. Instead, I'm able to validate my own self-worth, which has been revelatory. I can truly say that I feel really proud of who I am and my accomplishments and this is making me approach life in such a different way. There have been several pleasant side-effects that I have already noticed, including much more energy. I wake up earlier and feel really excited about each day. I have completely stopped procrastinating and being paralyzed by overwhelm. I've checked things off my to-do list that have been there for three years. Without even directly addressing it, I have stopped both comfort eating and over exercising and have been able to have downtime to rest where previously I was terrified to be alone with my thoughts and had to fill every moment. I cannot overstate how absolutely life transforming this has been for me and in such a short amount of time. This simple technique to change my thoughts has revolutionized my life, my happiness and my health and, more importantly, taught me a tool I can continue to apply to any area of my life."

So like, really, you guys, I am so grateful every day that this is my fucking job. I mean, it's sort of being grateful to the universe but I'm also just grateful to myself that I did the work to create this and to share this. And so I'm reading that to you because I want you to see what is possible. This is not a normal result from a five-day challenge. I've had a couple of people actually post in the challenge Facebook group that this was life-changing, which was awesome. Not everybody's life changes in five days and that's fine. The person who wrote these comments was really ready for change, she was really primed, but most importantly, she was really committed to the process and she went all in.

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A lot of you guys who did the challenge gave it a try, you were not all in. and that's okay. I do not say that to judge you, of course, but just to tell you the difference between you and this woman's experience is not that she's better than you or she's smarter than you or her problems are less serious than yours or any of that; it's that she is all in.

We all have the capacity to go all in, but most of us never really do. We look at other people and we wonder why they're so lucky or why are they better than us or why are they more deserving than us? But none of that's true; they're not. They're just all in. that's why they have what you want and if you want it, you have to be all in on yourself too.

So that really brings me to the topic for today, which is, what actually creates transformation? The premise of most forms of talk-therapy is that insight produces transformation. The idea is that, if you understand something, you can change it. That might be understanding your past, understanding your subconscious, understanding your family dynamics, understanding your own trauma. Whatever it is, the idea is that if you understand it, change will happen. But a lot of you have been to therapy and it helped with insight, and yet your life is not dramatically different. And that's because insight is not the same as transformation. Now, it would be great if all we ever needed was one nice big revelation and then our problem was solved, but that's now how it works.

Insight simply means you understand what thought patterns you have. It may also mean you understand where they came from. It usually means understanding how they play out in your life now. That's insight. None of that magically gives you the ability to change them.

Insight is necessary, but it's not sufficient. And on its own, insight rarely creates transformation. So let's say that you experience a lot of anxiety when you are worried that an authority figure may be upset with you; say it's your boss. You go to therapy or you talk to friends or you journal out all

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your thoughts on paper and you figure out that it reminds you of when one of your parents was mad at you growing up and that scares you.

Okay, so now what? You're going to keep having the same automatic anxiety response because you're going to keep having the same thought that your boss might be mad at you and you're in trouble and it's a problem. Knowing where it comes from, like where you first develop that thought, isn't really going to help you because while it explains it, it doesn't change it.

You are not going to feel chill about your boss until you are able to change the thought that is creating fear. You have to actually rewire your brain to think in a new way. It really doesn't matter where the thought came from; it matters if you change it.

You know, yeah, sometimes knowing where the thought came from can be useful because it helps you see it is just a thought and not like a truth about the world, right. Sometimes it's helpful to be like, oh I was taught to think this thing. I don't think it just because it's like a message from the deep that must be true but knowing that almost never just solves the problem.

That is because insight doesn't create transformation. What creates transformation is application. Knowing your thoughts cause your feelings doesn't make your thoughts change and it doesn't really make your feelings any less intense. You have to apply the knowledge and practice actually changing each thought.

Let me give you another example. Let's say you figure out in therapy that you are attracted to unavailable men or women because you are scared to really get close to someone in case they reject you. So you choose someone who you kind of know, or explicitly know, will end up rejecting you right away. That way, you don't have to wait for the other shoe to drop.

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So does knowing this change the fact that you are lusting over your married colleague or chasing your commitment-phobe ex? Say it all together now; no it does not. Now you can just watch yourself running after them in slow motion begging them to love you, but you still don't know how to change it because you have insight, but insight doesn't create transformation. Application is what creates transformation. Coaching yourself or getting coached is what creates transformation. Practicing thought work is what creates transformation.

Not only identifying your current thoughts but applying the premises of thought work to actually change your thoughts and create new ones. Identifying your old thoughts is only half the battle. It's an important part of the battle, for sure, and most of us only are aware of the tip of the iceberg. Even if we think we are introspective and self-aware, we're only aware of maybe 20% of what is going on in there.

But even once you dive down and see the rest of the iceberg, if you don't have any tools to move it or melt it, your insight isn't going to be much help to you. You have to apply the tools and you have to apply yourself to changing your thoughts in order to create lasting transformation.

Revelation is nice, but revelation happens in a moment, it's a flash of insight. It's not lasting change. Revelation is like a sexy stranger in a bar. Some of you are addicted to insight and revelation. You like to talk and talk and talk and think and think and think about your problems. Revelation is sexy and mysterious and exciting but doesn't really get you anywhere. Application is transformation.

Application is like a real relationship that requires daily intimacy and connection and commitment. It's not a sexy stranger in a bar. It's that person you see all the time, even when you're not getting along, even when you're tired, even when one of you wants to have sex and the other one

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wants to watch TV, even when you have to go their mother's house for Thanksgiving.

Application is a relationship, and it's really a relationship with yourself. It's showing up for yourself day after day, even when it's hard or challenging or confusing and your brain wants to quit. Application is taking what I teach you on this podcast and actually applying it, not just listening. Revelation and insight are easy. They feel great and they don't require effort.

They arrive in a flash. They're often delivered by someone else. They feel great for a moment. Application is where the rubber hits the road. Application is where you change your life. Application is where you commit to living an examined, authentic, engaged life. Application is where you promise to stay awake, stay aware, to show up for yourself again and again. If you listen to the podcast and you feel great for 20 minutes and then you feel crazy an hour later, that's because insight doesn't change your thought pattern.

Application is where rubber hits the road. Application is where you change your life. Application is where you commit to living an examined, authentic, engaged existence. Application is where you promise to stay awake, stay aware, to show up for yourself again and again. Application is what creates transformation.

You truly cannot imagine what you are capable of accomplishing in this one wild and precious life you have if you apply what I teach you. It would blow your fucking mind. And I know because I have blown my own mind time and time again since I started applying these teachings. So give yourself the gift of your own time and energy. Apply yourself. Blow your own fucking mind.

Insight is easy. Application is what matters. Give yourself the gift of your own application; that is what will create lasting transformation for you. What

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I really want you to give yourself is the gift of application, is the gift of commitment and is understanding that the reason you haven't changed yet is because you haven't applied these tools. It's not because you're broken. It's not because you're a special sorry snowflake that can't be changed.

Everybody I do a counsel call thinks that's true; that's never true. You're not a special sorry sad and broken snowflake, you just – no one's ever taught you this stuff and I'm teaching you on the podcast, but insight isn't the same as transformation. So what you need is to apply what you're learning. That's what will change your life and it works.

Alright, my loved ones, my lovely chickens, I will talk to you guys next week.

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