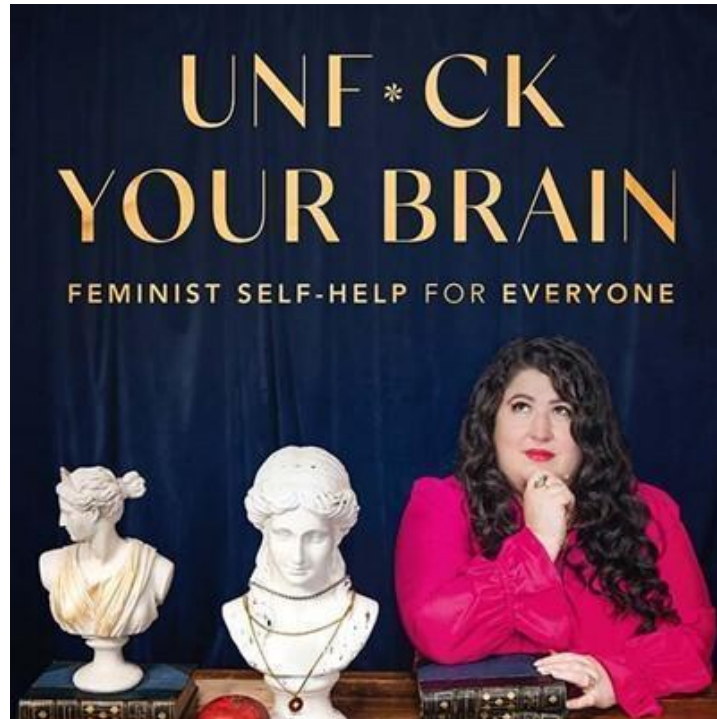


UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

[UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil](#)

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

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, how are you? I am finally home after a summer of traveling constantly. And it feels really good to be home for a minute, although it also feels really loud in New York City right now. They're doing construction in front of our building. They're doing construction in front of my office. They're doing construction on the building my office is in. I feel like I am being chased around by jackhammers. But it's also the two weeks in fall in New York City where it's glorious and you decide that the wrens and the rats are all totally worth it. So, I'm just enjoying the ride.

But now that I'm back and kind of settled for fall, I'm really focusing on how to help my students, especially my students in *The Clutch*, get the transformations that they want, the transformations that came into *The Clutch* to create. And so I've been thinking a lot about what the biggest challenges are in learning to coach yourself. Learning to coach yourself is the secret to life. It is the skill that makes anything else in your life possible. I think it's in some ways, almost as transformative as learning to read or write.

It's like learning how to read your own mind or write your own thoughts and learning how the world works and understanding why things are happening the way they are. And learning how to make things happen the way you want, learning how to actually feel empowered rather than a victim of your circumstances. But just like you don't learn to read overnight, you don't learn to coach yourself once and then be able to do it perfectly, which sometimes our perfectionist brains think that we should.

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

But if you think about reading, that's not how we teach a kid to read. We don't just explain it intellectually once. We're like, "Listen, so there's letters and they make up words and so you just read the letters and then those are words and there you go you're reading", and then expect them to be able to read. That's not how that works. The same thing with learning to coach yourself. There are challenges that come up when you're trying to practice it, which are completely normal, that everybody experiences.

Your brain has a lot of experience in thinking about the world in ways that are incompatible with what you're trying to do. So it's kind of like trying to learn a second language when you already know a first language. Except that at the same time your brain is yelling a lot about how you can't ever do it and you can't learn it and it won't work and the second language isn't real. So it's totally normal to have a lot of blocks come up and challenges when you're trying to learn to coach yourself.

So I've been thinking a lot about what are those challenges, what are those blocks? And I think there are six primary blocks to self-coaching and particularly to changing your thoughts. And that's what I want to talk about in this podcast today. So I'm just going to teach you these six blocks. and I want you to listen and see if you can identify that any or all of these are happening in your brain.

So block number one is we don't want to accept a circumstance. We understand intellectually that a circumstance doesn't cause our feelings, but we still want to change it to feel better. And we're still spinning in a lot of brain drama around the circumstance and how we can make it change and go away. And sometimes our brains get really tricky and we decide that if we change our thoughts, then we'll show up differently and that will change the circumstance.

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

Sometimes we don't want to accept a circumstance because we think that it's important for some reason for us to reject or resist the circumstance. That it means something about us, that that's what a good person would do or something. Sometimes we don't want to accept a circumstance because we just really believe that it's creating our feelings. And then sometimes we decide that if we change our thoughts then we'll show up differently, and then that will change the circumstance.

So for instance, if my partner is mostly distant and I think it's because I'm anxious and I need too much reassurance. So then I come into thought work because I want to learn how to become more confident so that I won't need so much reassurance and they will like me more and want to be closer and no longer be distant. I'm trying to change myself, change my thoughts to change the circumstance.

Or I run a business and a client wants a refund and I'm anxious that they're mad at me. So I'm going to coach myself to calm down so I can say the right thing so it will make them not mad at me. When we do this, we're not accepting the circumstance. We don't see it as neutral. We're trying to use thought work like magic to change the circumstance. And as long as we don't see that it's neutral and we're not willing to accept it as neutral, we can't change our thoughts.

And again, a refresher, neutral doesn't mean awesome, I love it and I approve of it. Neutral doesn't even mean, I don't have any values around this thing. Neutral means I understand that it is a human brain that creates meaning about things in the world. And that this is a thing that my brain is creating the meaning of, not that the thing itself is impacting me directly without my thoughts being part of it.

Block number two is that we're doing our thought work in a rush, that causes us to do it at a superficial level. I don't mean superficial, like we're

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

being silly or we're being frivolous. I literally mean sort of the first level. We're only looking at the first level thought. We're not really finding the thought that really matters. We're not getting deep enough and that's because we're not being curious. We're in a rush to change the thought so we're not giving it space to unfold and we're not getting to know it.

Think about if you're in a huge rush, let's say that you are late to an event and you stain what you're wearing. And so you're in a huge rush to buy a piece of clothing. So you just run into a store, you grab the first thing that vaguely fits, you run out, you're all panicked. That's what we're doing with our thoughts. We feel bad, we want to change feeling bad. So we just run in panicked, we grab the first thought we see and we try to change it ASAP. And then sometimes we're trying to change it to something that doesn't even fit because we didn't even see what the problem was.

Maybe we know that we spilled something on ourselves and we think that we stained our shirt, but we didn't even check really, because we're so panicked and we run into a store and we buy a new shirt. And then it turns out, actually we'd stained our pants but we didn't realize that because we didn't slow down to see what was actually happening. Where did the spill actually hit? And then we wonder, why that doesn't work. We're not slowing down and being curious enough to find out what's really going on.

Block number three is that we still just don't want to feel our feelings and listen, me neither sometimes. My joke about this is always that people are totally willing to feel their feelings, just some other time in the future, hypothetically, just never the feeling that's happening right now is the simplest advice. And it's the hardest thing to actually do, to allow a negative emotion to happen without resisting it or reacting to it. To receive the emotion and sit with it and let it flow and pass through.

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

If you're not willing to feel what you're feeling, you cannot change your thought. It's as simple as that, it will not stick because when you are trying to resist a feeling and push it away, you're telling yourself that the feeling is dangerous and you have to get away from it, which means that you are getting yourself in an activated state. Your nervous system is activated and you can't access your higher order thinking as well when you're activated. And you need your higher order thinking to change a thought.

So if you are trying to resist the feeling and telling yourself that the feeling is dangerous and you need to get away from it but you can't get away from it because it's in your body. You're kind of revving yourself up, stressing yourself out and that makes it impossible to access the level of thinking you need to actually be able to change a thought.

Block number four is that we're trying to change our thoughts to get away from feeling ashamed about them. This is super common and most of the time we're totally unaware of why we're doing this. We often have a lot of shame about the way we are thinking, feeling or acting. And we naturally think that the way to get rid of that shame is to change those thoughts, feelings or actions.

So for instance, if you feel bad about yourself when you yell at your kids, then you want to stop yelling at your kids so that you won't feel bad about yourself anymore. Or you feel bad about yourself for thinking that you really don't want to hang out with a certain friend. You want to change those thoughts so that you want to hang out with them or like them more and not feel bad about it. We want to avoid the thought work of self-acceptance and just change the thing we're beating ourselves up about because our theory is that if the thing isn't there, there'd be no need to beat ourselves up, that's our logic.

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

But if you're trying to change thoughts to avoid feeling bad about yourself indirectly like this, it won't work right. Direct thought change on the feeling about yourself would be to change the thoughts that are shaming yourself for how you think, feel or act. But we're trying to do it indirectly. We're trying to change the way we're acting or what we're thinking about the thing that we feel bad about in order to change the thing we feel bad about so we don't have to beat ourselves up about it. When you do that, you're accepting the premise that your thought, feeling or action is bad, and that you're bad for having it.

So you're trying to change it so you're no longer bad, so you can feel better about yourself. But that doesn't work because embedded in that is this judgment that you're bad for having these thoughts or feelings or actions. And that means when you think that, you're creating shame and anxiety with that judgment. And that makes you, again, want to avoid the thoughts, not get to know them, not be real with yourself about what you think or who you like or how you feel. And that is blocking you.

You can't have the feeling, you can't use curiosity to get deeper in the thought, you're just creating additional distress by judging yourself and you are blocking yourself from being able to actually change what's going on. You have to resolve the shame first. You'll see if you're in *The Clutch*, I'm coaching on this all the time. You have to work on the feeling bad about however you think, feel or act before you can change any of it.

Block number five which is related is the inability to extend compassion to ourselves. And we're often very good at normalizing challenging experiences and thoughts and feelings and putting other people's issues in context, normalizing other people's challenging experiences. And we see them as a whole unique and valuable person who's just having a hard time, whatever's happening. But we are not very good at doing that about or for ourselves.

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

When we're approaching ourselves with judgment, we're unable to be curious. We can't resolve shame. We're very focused on changing because we think there's something wrong with us. And that blinds us to how self-critical and unhelpful so much of our self-talk actually is. We aren't able to see it because we're so used to being critical of ourselves. So we then are mistaking our self-critical thoughts for circumstances.

For instance, so many women come to me for coaching and they will say, "Well, I'm just really disorganized so I really need help getting more organized." They just think that that's a circumstance they're describing. That's actually a self-criticism. That's a negative thought about yourself. And so when we can't extend compassion to ourselves and we can't see ourselves with compassion or criticizing ourselves all the time in ways we don't even see, and that's producing again, that shame that blocks us from being able to change our thinking.

Block number six is the desire to change our thoughts at all. Now, I know that sounds paradoxical. This podcast is literally all about changing your thinking. But when we're desperate to change a thought, when we're in a rush to change a thought, we're not accepting the thought itself. We cannot be curious about the thought. We cannot get to know the thought. When we're in a rush to change our thought, we are resisting and rejecting it. You're sensing a theme, we're creating a stress response around that thought.

We don't want the thought to be there. We're trying to get rid of the thought. If it comes up, we're upset and that makes it hard for us to think clearly and that means we can't change it. So we have to learn how to stop being in a rush to change a thought if we ever do want to change it.

So those are the six biggest blocks that come up in self-coaching. I myself have had every single one of these, that's how I identified them. And I have

UFYB 310: Six Reasons Your Self-Coaching Isn't Sticking — And How to Solve Them

worked through all of them. And so if these things are happening in your brain when you're trying to coach yourself, just know it's normal, it's completely normal and really to be expected.

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