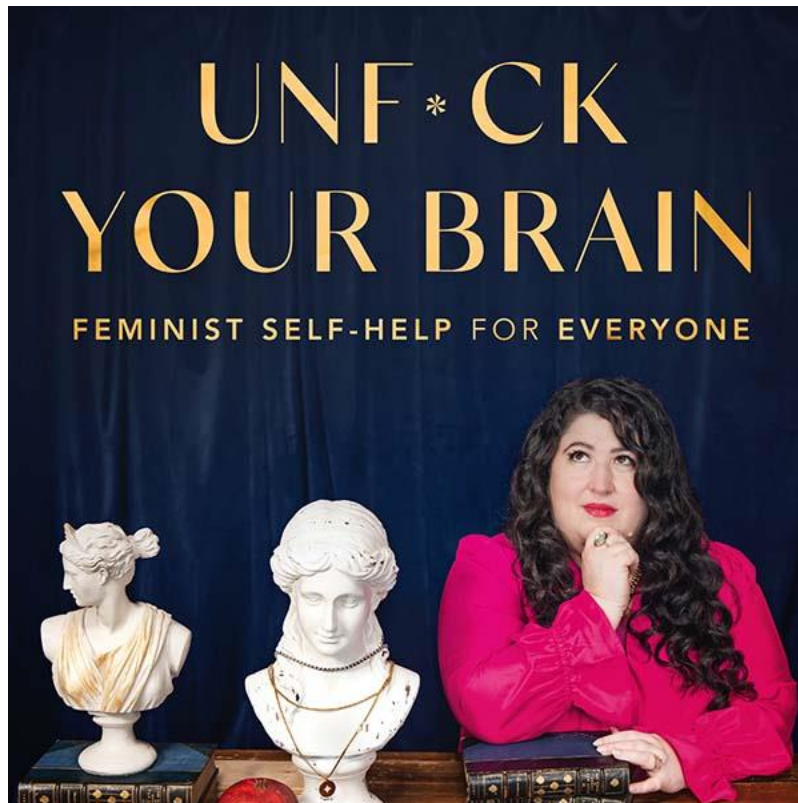


UFYB 372: Patriarchy-Proof Your Resolutions (Greatest Hits)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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There's one incredibly important safety check, let's call it, that you need to do on your goals and resolutions before you set them and implement them. And unfortunately, it's something that most coaches, even who specialize in goal setting or accomplishing something big or blowing your own mind, don't know how to do.

So in this episode, I'm going to talk to you about this one important check, which recently got quite a lot of attention on my social media account. And then we're going to dive into one of our greatest hits about how to choose and set a resolution. So let's get into it.

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.

All right. So recently I posted a video to my Instagram stories that got a lot of responses and I want to share the core idea with you. It's about how to patriarchy proof your resolutions. So when you set a goal or come up with a resolution, it is incredibly important to check and see how social programming has shaped that goal or resolution. And unfortunately, almost no one other than yours truly teaches you to do this because our social programming is so deeply embedded in our minds that we don't even realize when it's operating.

So let me give you an example. This is one of the examples I shared on my Instagram story. Let's say that, as was the case in 2024, one of my resolutions and goals was to show up on video more for my business, to do more stories on Instagram, speaking straight to you, to record more video ads, just to be more visible on video. If I did not know about patriarchy proofing my resolutions, what I would have resolved, my resolution, my

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goal would have been to make sure that I felt comfortable going on video more, which would have meant making sure that I, you know, had my hair done and put on makeup and dressed nicely every day for work so I'd be ready to feel confident to go on video anytime.

That is a resolution that 99.9% of people in the world would tell you sounded great. No, it's fucking terrible. Here's why. There is such insidious patriarchal programming in the way that that resolution is framed. Why, just because I'm a woman, do I need to have my hair done a certain way or be wearing makeup or be dressed a certain way to be allowed to show my face?

Why do I have to look a certain way? Why do I have to try to conform to conventional standards of attractiveness to have something to say, to be taken seriously, to show up to express my opinion? The real growth for me was not let me make sure that I'm conforming to these standards better so I can feel more comfortable without interrogating any of that socialization. The resolution that I needed, the one I actually set was let me show up to do video whenever I've said I'm going to do video no matter how I look.

And that's why you've seen videos from me this year where I look very well-coiffed and prepared. I mean, I almost never wear makeup outside of photo shoots really, except for lipstick occasionally. So you've never really seen me probably looking super made up. But you've seen me with my hair done, you've seen me in a nice outfit, you've seen me against my curated background.

But you've also seen me with wet hair and wearing a dressing gown and sitting in an awkward corner of my living room with glare behind me because I knew how to patriarchy-proof my resolution and I knew how to check for that socialized programming that would have had me spending more time and energy trying to conform to a standard that I don't agree with

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in the first place and that would have kind of drained and misdirected me away from what was really liberatory about this goal.

What is so important about this goal was not just showing up on video, which yes, is great, it's good for my business, it's good for connecting with all of you, but what was powerfully transformative about this experience was not requiring myself to look a certain way in order to show up. That's what really changed me this year. I would have missed out on all of that if I hadn't known how to patriarchy proof my resolutions.

So today is a greatest hits episode of how to choose a resolution. I talk about the importance of understanding why you are picking a certain goal or resolution and making sure that it does align with your values and that it is something that you have a really strong why for that really matters to you. I want you to also think about patriarchy proofing it.

And if you want some help with that, this is the best month to join The Society because inside the Feminist Help Society, we are spending all of December and January focused on resolutions and on patriarchy proofing our resolutions and on planning them and executing them and learning from any stumbles we have and making sure we don't fall off the wagon and instead we ride that wagon to success in 2025.

Every year we offer an exclusive mini course on how to set and achieve your resolutions and every year I add brand new cutting edge tools to it based on what I've learned and changed in my own life that year. And so this year, again, when you join The Society in December, right now, you get access to this mini course. It teaches you about how to choose resolutions and goals that align with your values, how to know what kind of resolutions and goals to choose, how to check them, right, how to patriarchy-proof them, also how to plan them and implement them and how to make sure you succeed in them.

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And it includes a brand new process and workbook that I created this year for learning from the times that you don't execute perfectly. So it's called The 3C Process and it is a totally new approach to learning from and growing from the times that you do make a mistake or you don't show up or you don't keep your new habit and how to get better and better at that resolution or that goal that you're trying to reach.

So I have been using this myself the last few months. It has been so, so helpful and powerful and has helped me change some habits in my life that I really didn't ever think I'd be able to change. So I'm really excited to share it with y'all.

And if you are listening to this just because you love the podcast but you're not even feeling resolutions this year, this is still the best time to join The Society because we have had the same price for almost 10 years now since The Society was founded. And in January, we are finally raising the price only for members who join after we raise it.

So if you're already in The Society, you get to keep your current price as long as you stay, and if you join in December, as long as you're in by the moment that we raise the price, you get to keep the price you joined at as long as you stay in the society. But in January, the price is going up and significantly. So if you've been thinking about it, if you've been on the fence, if you've been like, "Oh yeah, I'm gonna join in January, maybe February, next year when I have time," No, ma'am, please join now because you're gonna be so mad at yourself if you wait until January or February or March and then the price is so much more.

So come join Feminist Self-Help Society now get access to the mini course on how to set and achieve your resolutions, how to patriarchy proof your goals, how to do the 3C Process anytime you stumble to make sure that you keep iterating and innovating and learning how to do it better and

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better so that you actually get to experience who you can become when you really learn how to shift your brain.

You can go to unfuckyourbrain.com/society to join or text your best email to +1 347 934 8861. You don't need a code word. We'll send the link right to you. And with that, let's get into how to choose your resolutions.

Hello my chickens, welcome back. We're doing our second today of our three-part series on resolutions, goals, but specifically New Year's Eve resolutions and why I love them. I love setting them. I love keeping them. I even love when I fail and I need to try again and why I recommend you do as well.

So last week I gave you my defense of resolutions, why I think they get a bad rap, why they're actually really important, and what purpose they serve in our lives. If you missed last week, go back and listen. It's super important to understand the purpose of a resolution in general in order to choose one effectively.

The short version is that the purpose of a resolution is to help bridge the gap between the values we have for how we want our lives to actually be and the familiarity or stagnation that our brains always default to choosing because it's comfortable and familiar and it is energy conserving to just stay where we are. So again, go listen to the whole episode, but that is the very short summary.

So this week, I want to talk about how to actually choose a resolution. The next logical step of what I taught in that last episode is that when it's time to choose a resolution, we need to use our values to guide that process.

And this is not really how we normally try to set resolutions. Normally we think of what we need to do better or how we need to be better, and usually

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that means we're actually navigating by shame. So normally what we do unconsciously is we zero in on an area where we feel bad about ourselves and we feel ashamed or guilty or not good enough, and then we set a resolution to try to change that thing so we can feel better. So we're often trying to change a circumstance or an action we take to force ourselves to think nicer thoughts about ourselves.

So for instance, if we have a lot of self-critical thoughts about our body, we might resolve to lose weight. If we have a lot of self-critical thoughts about our parenting, we might resolve to stop yelling at our kids. If we have a lot of self-critical thoughts about smoking too much weed. We might resolve to stop doing that.

This approach rarely works for a few reasons. It's also one of the reasons that resolutions get a bad name or a bad rap or seem like something that nobody ever really does, sort of nobody ever really carries through on. Because when we feel shame, we're in a rush to change the behavior and we're trying to avoid our feelings. And that means we can't actually get to know the feelings that are driving the behavior. We aren't using any strategic insight or understanding to change the behavior, we're just trying to use willpower.

So if you have never gone to the gym consistently and you feel ashamed about that and you feel guilty about not being quote-unquote "healthier" and you decide to set a resolution based on that, if you aren't actually curious about why you haven't gone to the gym, then the resolution is basically meaningless. You just say to yourself, I'm going to start doing it and maybe I'll buy myself some cute workout clothes to motivate me, right? And I'll put all the gym classes on my calendar. But you're not actually paying attention to the thoughts and feelings that have prevented you from doing it. So it's not gonna be successful.

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When we feel shame about something, we always try to get away from it, we never try to get to know it better. And so we just forge ahead with no understanding really of why we've had trouble in the past and then shockingly we continue to have trouble. And this is how people end up in that cycle where they make the same resolution every fucking year and never make any progress with it.

Second, when you already feel shame about something and feel bad about it, especially if it's been going on for years, you have subconsciously often taken this on as part of your identity, right? It's like, I'm an emotional eater. I'm a bad mom. I'm someone who smokes too much. That's just always how I've been. I've never been able to quit, whatever it is.

When you aren't looking at your thinking, you won't ever challenge that identity and you will keep living it out and being that person. Remember I taught in the last episode that your brain feels safe when things are consistent even if they suck. So if you think you're a bad mom and you scream at your kids and your brain – your brain feels fine. You may feel unhappy about it, but the part of your brain that is trying to keep you alive is like, great, this all checks out. I am who I think I am. I'm doing the things that I think I do. I'm going to keep doing this. This is safe. This is consistent. There's no scary change.

Third, when you start with a negative thought and feeling, it's very hard to create positive and productive change from that place. Because you don't actually know where you're going. You're not moving towards the person you want to be. You're just trying to move away from the person you are now, who you judge and want to disassociate yourself from. Right?

So you don't really have a positive vision of the person you're trying to become and positive thoughts about that person. You're just trying to get away from how you feel now and the self-critical thoughts you have.

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So just think about what happens if you get scared and start to run away, like if a lion comes into your intersection and you need to run, there's no great strategy or direction. You're just going to run fast, right, and try to get away. You don't know where you're going. You don't know how to get there efficiently. You're not thinking clearly at all. And that's what happens when you are trying to set a resolution out of shame. Shame-based resolutions are a drag and they don't work, full stop.

So instead, I want to recommend that you set your resolutions based on a positive motivation, which is aligning some area of your life with your chosen values. So here's what that looks like.

First, you need to identify your values. This does not have to be totally encyclopedic. Some people have two or three values that kind of apply to their whole lives. Some people have different values in different areas of their lives. You could also pick one value that you really want to embody in 2024. I mean, a lot of us have just never thought about this explicitly at all.

So to give you an example, some of my overall life values are truth-telling, autonomy, and pleasure. So I value honesty and transparency in telling the truth. I want to tell people the truth and I want to be told the truth.

I value autonomy. I like to be in charge of my own life. I want to direct it. I want to manage my own mind and like be in control of what happens to me. Even in intimate relationships, I want to maintain independence and self-direction and I want other people to do the same and a lot of my life is about helping other people create autonomy.

I value pleasure. I don't want to just grind out my life. I'm not trying to save all the good stuff for the end. I'm not an ascetic. I'm not a minimalist. I want beautiful surroundings. I want fresh flowers. I want soft and silky clothes. I

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want delicious food. I want lots of good sex, right? I just want a lot of pleasure and beauty in my life.

My partner and I always have this back and forth where he says, well, honey, you know, like we could stay in the Motel 8 on vacation and I'd be happy. And I'm like, yeah, I don't pick the beautiful hotels for you. It's for me. I want them. There's nothing wrong with staying in a Motel 8 if that's what floats your boat. But I want pleasure and beauty around me. That's a value of mine and I will spend my time and energy and money to create that. These are very individual, right? Lots of people don't value pleasure that much and that's totally fine.

I have beloved ones in my life and probably including my partner who, yeah, they like pretty things or beautiful places, but it's not an overriding motivation for them. You know, it's like nice to be independent, but they really value interdependence or they really value family over autonomy or whatever else. This is so individual.

So the first step is to identify your values. There are various lists of values you can find online, or you can just brainstorm. Once you've got your values, there are kind of 2 ways to choose a good resolution for you.

The first is more if you don't know what resolution to pick yet. You don't know what you want. So you can look at the list of your values and ask yourself, where in my life am I not living in alignment with these values right now? So if I was doing this, I might look at my life and ask myself, is there any area where I'm not telling myself or other people the truth right now? Like, am I people pleasing or routinely telling white lies about something? Or is there an area where I'm not telling myself the truth? Like, am I in a relationship that isn't working, or is there something about my health that I'm avoiding really dealing with? Something like that. Right? I might set a resolution around that.

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Is there any area where I'm not prioritizing autonomy or where I'm not respecting someone else's autonomy? Am I trying to control my partner, my friends, my family? I could set a resolution around that. Is there any area where I'm not making enough effort to include and incorporate pleasure? Am I working too much or too hard? Am I not making time to do things I find pleasurable? Or are there areas where things are unpleasurable for no good reason, and I'm not doing anything about it?

So that's where you sort of start with your values, and then you look at your life and come up with a resolution that way. The other way you can do it is if you already have a list of goals or resolutions that you're really committed to and really wanna accomplish, let's say, like, you've been telling yourself you wanna go to Pilates regularly or you wanna start practicing the piano again. You really wanna have a consistent morning routine.

You can take that list and see which, if any, of them are inspired by one of your values. You might have put go to Pilates regularly on the list originally because you feel shame about not working out. But if one of your values is strength or aging well or flexibility or something, now you have a positive value and a positive reason you can connect to that resolution, and that's gonna make the process feel very different. That gives you this positive motivation, this thing you're moving towards. It's not just moving towards going to Pilates for its own sake. It's moving towards being a person who goes to Pilates regularly because one of my values is strength and flexibility. Or if my value is physical health or my value is aging well or whatever. So it's very different than just trying to get away from your shame.

When you're just trying to get away from your shame, part of the problem with that is the shame doesn't disappear overnight, and so it's gonna keep coming up. And so you're gonna stop doing the activity because it's not working. It's not getting rid of all the shame. If you feel shame about not

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working out and you work out for 3 weeks and you miss a day or 2, you're gonna feel shame again, and then your brain is gonna be like, there's no point in doing this. I still feel shame because you can't get rid of shame overnight.

When you're moving towards a positive vision of yourself and a value, then even if you falter and some shame comes up, it doesn't matter. That's not the reason to stop because the point is that you're moving towards this positive goal. So a little bit of shame on the way is not the end of the world.

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.