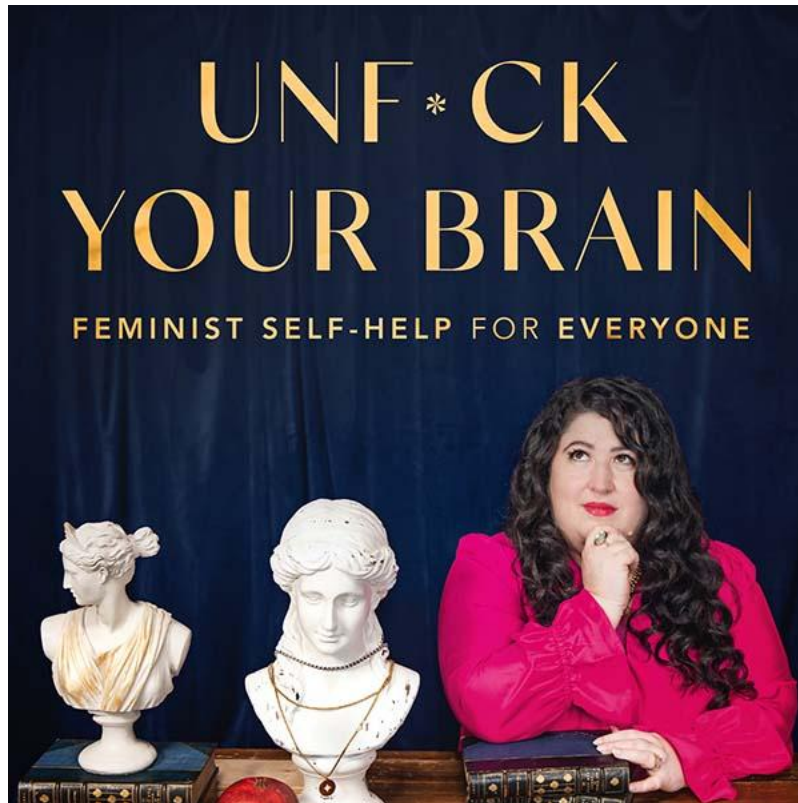# UFYB 397: How to Stop Giving a F*ck What Other People Think (Greatest Hits)

Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil

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For the past few weeks, we've been talking about how to stop caring so much what other people think about you. And today, I am sharing one of our most popular episodes all about this topic to finish off this series called How to Stop Giving a Fuck What Other People Think of You. It's a stronger version of the statement of the brand. This episode is super important because it really explains why one of the solutions often given to the problem doesn't work.

So in the last two episodes, I've been helping you understand the source of the problem, why we care so much about what other people think. I've helped you understand why certain opinions other people have really stick to us and others we're able to brush off and what the difference is. And in this episode, we're gonna get into the first thing to understand about the solution, which is that you actually need a solution. You can't just stop.

So in this episode, I explain why the advice to just, like, not take it so personally. Let it go. Don't make it a big deal. Just don't worry about it. It's fucking useless, obviously. But I'm gonna explain why neurologically it's useless and give you some kind of suggestions of where you need to start focusing your energy instead. It is not too late to really learn how to do this concretely and specifically by coming to my brand new free training called How to Stop Caring What Other People Think. You can register for that at unfuckyourbrain.com/caring or text your email to +1 (347) 997-1784, and the code word is caring.

So make sure you sign up. Make sure you get your spot. Of course, there's always a replay if you can't attend live, and then take a listen to this episode because you really need to understand why it just doesn't help to keep telling yourself to just get over it and what you really need to start doing instead to be able to shift these thought patterns. Let's go.

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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.

So, so many women struggle with caring way too much about what other people think of us. This has been on my mind a lot, of course, as I'm heading into my wedding, which is happening the day after this episode releases, because everyone has a million opinions about weddings and marriages. It's such a microcosm of what women are taught.

First, as we talk about often here, humans evolved in small tribes of hunter/gatherers, and those tribal relationships were essential to survival. You could not make it in nature alone, so we evolved to be sensitive to the opinions of others around us and to care about whether we're being accepted by our tribe.

But this pattern is 10x-ed by the way that women are socialized specifically. We are taught that certain things are naturally important to us, or we are naturally good at them, like relationships, childbearing, mothering, domesticity in general, and that we need to do these things and be good at them in order to be good enough to be accepted by the tribe.

But we're also taught that we are always doing these things all wrong, and we need someone else to tell us how to be better at them so we can finally feel okay about ourselves. Because women are socialized to believe that we have to be perfect to be acceptable. We are conditioned from birth to believe that everyone around us is always judging and evaluating us and our performance at any of our socially required roles, and always finding us wanting.

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Women are systematically alienated from their own sense of discernment, their own opinions, their own perceptions. We are taught that we're irrational and too emotional and too sensitive. We take everything too seriously and we need to lighten up, and we need to take a joke.

We're taught that men are authorities and leaders, and women are not well suited to those responsibilities or positions in society. We're taught that our bodies are not our animal homes, but objects to shape and perfect for other people's viewing pleasure. Or bodies to burn out and exhaust in order to support other people with our labor and energy.

So, of course, we believe that other people's opinions of us are what matters most, because our entire selfhood and purpose for being is framed to us as being about other people's use and opinions. And then, we're also told that we shouldn't care what other people think. We should be independent. We should love ourselves. We should not fawn or people please.

But we can't help it, of course. Our brains still obsess over whether everyone at our cousin's wedding thinks it's pathetic that we're single. Whether everyone at our college reunion thinks we've gained weight or look old. Whether opposing counsel thinks we're bad at lawyering. Whether the other moms at pickup think we look frazzled. Whether our partner thinks we're too naggy or too demanding.

Because you take a brain, trained to believe that other people's opinions are what matter of it, and then you say to that brain, "Hey, you should also not care what other people think." Your brain has no idea what that would even be like. That's an impossible instruction for your brain. And you can't really replace something with nothing.

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This is where so much advice goes wrong. So much of what is framed to women as empowering advice is ineffective, because it tells women to take a problematic thought pattern, like worrying about what people will think, like people pleasing, whatever, and just not do that. As if you have any idea how to not do that. Right?

The ancient Greeks used to say that nature abhors a vacuum, and your brain abhors a vacuum too. Meaning, your brain cannot just take a thought pattern it has and then go blank. You cannot stop thinking something at the drop of a hat. You cannot just stop caring what other people think in a vacuum. But there is something you can do, and that is what I'm going to explain next.

So, your brain, like I just said, cannot just stop a thought pattern. But you can *replace* a thought pattern with something else. We cannot just stop caring what other people think, as if we can wipe out those thoughts and just leave a blank background in our brain.

What we have to do instead is start caring more about what we think than about what other people think. We have to replace the thought patterns currently there, that worry about what other people think, with thought patterns or prioritize what we think. You have to decide ahead of time what to believe about yourself. And you have to practice those thoughts to replace the rumination and fixation on what other people think.

Let's look at an example. Let's say that you know you want a certain kind of romantic relationship, and you're willing to wait for the right fit. You're doing your own work on your own thought patterns, but you're not going to get into a relationship that isn't the kind you want just to be in one. But you worry that your family are all thinking that there's something wrong with you that you're single, or that your friends are pitying you.

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You can't just tell your brain to stop thinking that. You have to decide on purpose what to think about your relationship status. And you have to practice those thoughts until they become stronger than your thoughts about what other people might think. Know that the solution in this example is not to focus on thoughts about how maybe your family isn't judging you, or maybe your friends don't pity you. You can't ever convince your brain 100% about what you're imagining other people may or may not believe.

And if that's what you're focusing on, you're still teaching your brain that other people's opinions of you are what matter. What you have to work on really believing is what you want to believe about your relationship status for yourself. Because here's the kicker, the thoughts you are worried other people have, are the thoughts that *you* have.

Think about something you love and value about yourself and truly think is awesome. How often do you worry what other people think about that? None, I can tell you. The things you fixate on worrying about, other people's opinions of, are the pieces and the places in your thoughts and your life that you still have some conflicting thoughts. Or you just have negative thoughts; they're not even conflicting.

And that's good news. Because it means when you change your own thoughts about yourself, you will naturally no longer care what other people are thinking about you. By rewiring your brain to have different thoughts about yourself, you will stop thinking about what other people think about you entirely.

So, in this instance, this example, if you really truly 100% believed that your relationship status was awesome, and you did not believe you needed anyone else to validate that, you would not be ruminating on this fear. So, the work is not to *stop* caring what other people think about whatever it is

that you're fixated on. It's to start caring more about what *you* think. Focus your mental energy on telling yourself the truth about what you think.

Uncovering all of the socialized beliefs you have, that you maybe wish you didn't have, or don't want to think you believe, they're still in your subconscious, and they're still driving your thinking. And when you try to pretend that they're not there, that actually trips you up. I think sometimes what happens is that we don't want to admit the negative thoughts we have about ourselves.

It's like we think if we admit what we really think that we're giving it energy, or it's even kind of more pathetic, or we're not being a good feminist or something else, or being kind of needy or ridiculous, like whatever our thoughts are. But when you are pretending that you don't have these thoughts, it's actually preventing you from changing them. Because it keeps you pretending that you feel totally confident about something that you really don't yet.

And so, you have to instead work on, step by step, a new belief you can actually believe. If you are obsessing or bothered about what other people think about something in your life, then we know that you don't truly believe that that thing is okay, or that you are good at it. Or in this example, your relationship status is 100% cool, whatever that is.

So, it's not helpful to pretend you do believe this really positive thought, or tell yourself that you should. What would be much more helpful is practicing a "ladder thought" that you can actually believe. That means it makes your body feel a little relief when you think it.

In this relationship example, something like, "Just because a lot of people think being single is bad, doesn't mean that's true. People have been very

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wrong before about things a lot of them believed. There are a lot of things about me that matter at least as much as my relationship status."

Or if, like me, you like to make your ladder thoughts very literal in a humorous way sometimes, something like, "It's possible that my worth as a human being doesn't depend on whether or not someone else puts their tongue in my mouth on a regular basis." Pick your thought or come up with your own. Maybe none of those thoughts resonate. That's okay, too. Every brain is different.

But what's really important here is that when you learn that whenever you are fixating on what other people think about you, that is just a flashing red signal that *you* have thoughts about this area of your life, and you need to really get real about what those thoughts are. You need to be honest with yourself about what those thoughts are. Don't sugarcoat it, don't avoid them.

Don't just try to think something super positive. It's not helping you. It's not changing your thinking. It's not making you feel more independent. You need to get honest with yourself about what you really believe; all those thoughts you fear are true that you don't even want to say out loud, right?

In this relationship example, the thoughts like, "Maybe there's something wrong with me. Maybe I'm just not lovable like other people. Maybe I'm just not attractive enough. Maybe I'm just not good enough. I just can't figure this out. Other people just don't like me." Those are your real thoughts deep down. And you need to get honest about those, so you can start building actual neural change starting from where you truly are, not starting from where you pretend to be.

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When you pretend that your thoughts are better than they are, or you won't acknowledge your real thoughts, it's like lying your way into a job and then you can't do the job. Starting from a fake place that your thoughts aren't actually at will not help you change them. So, you need some of those ladder thoughts.

Maybe none of the ones I offered hit for you, and that's okay, right? That's why if you're having trouble changing your thinking, I want to recommend that you come learn the process for brainstorming and testing new beliefs that I teach you inside The Feminist Self-Help Society, and get help from me and our expert coaches in finding the right ladder thoughts for your specific brain.

But one thing you can be sure of is that if you want to stop giving a fuck what other people think, you have to start giving a fuck what *you* think. You have to focus on what you think much more than what other people think. Until you build new belief systems that are so strong that it doesn't even occur to your brain to care what someone else thinks. That is what true freedom feels like.

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.

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