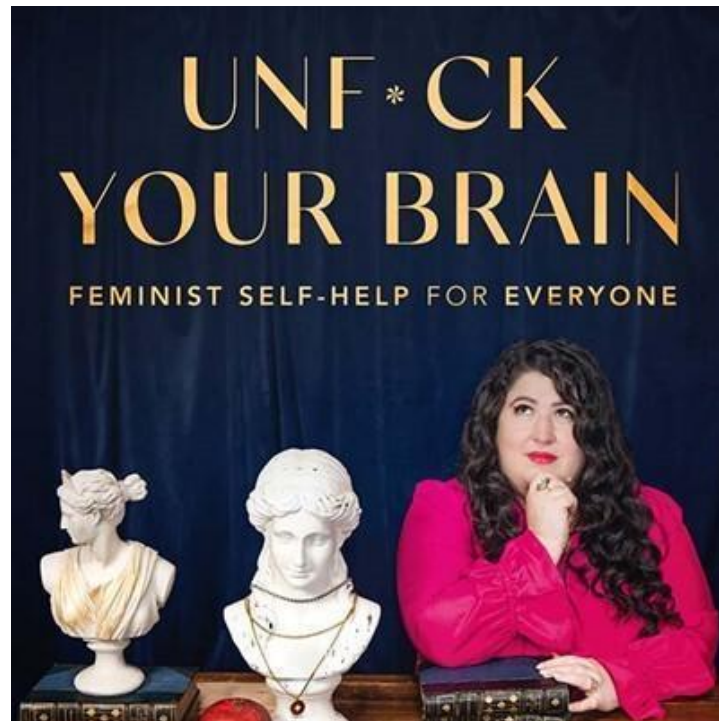


UFYB 403: Coaching Hotline: Struggle Bus & Job Confusion



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.

Welcome to this week's Coaching Hotline episode where I answer real questions from real listeners and coach you from afar. If you want to submit your question for consideration, go to unfuckyourbrain.com/coachinghotline, all one word. Or text your email to 1-347-997-1784. And when you get prompted for the code word, it's Coaching Hotline, all one word. Let's get into this week's questions.

So, here is the first question. "Do you recommend doing thought work while on the struggle bus? I wonder if thought work can prevent me from making the ride longer than necessary. For example, when I'm on the struggle bus, it feels like this weird indulgence to me. Like when I'm having the worst headache on a busy day at work, I usually find myself too miserable to take a painkiller that's literally on my desk. Meanwhile, I usually find it more effective to think things through when I'm not on an emotional roller coaster, so the next ride is slightly better. Is there something in between?"

The way that this question's phrased, I'm not exactly sure why you think these are two things on either end, but let me just answer it this way. You can totally try to do thought work while you're on the struggle bus. The point of the struggle bus is that when you are resisting being on the struggle bus, none of your thought work is going to work. Right? So the reason I recorded that episode and I use that metaphor is that what happens is when we're struggling, like when a negative emotion is persisting or a negative thought is persisting and we can't move through it, we start to get resistant and we think it shouldn't be happening and we don't want to be where we are. And when we don't want to be where we are, that's when we get stuck.

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So the struggle bus is a metaphor to help you remember that it's normal to have, you know, days that you have negative thoughts and feelings that you can't shift and that's not a problem and you can just ride that. So, I really think it can go either way. Sometimes when you recognize that and your resistance releases, then you actually can do the thought work and make progress on it. Sometimes you recognize that, your resistance releases, but you know, nothing's shifting still and that's okay. Right? The whole point is the bus is moving, you'll get where you need to get at some point. It's just like when you're thinking through a complicated idea, you know, those of you who do that for your like professionally or personally, like I always find that sometimes when I'm working on an intellectual problem, I don't get the answer right away.

Like I have to think about it. This would happen when I was kind of creating arguments for law review articles. It happens now sometimes when I'm debating something that I'm trying to learn how to figure out how to teach or I'm like see a conflict and two ideas I have and I'm trying to resolve them. It's like I have to let my brain work on it kind of in the background sometimes. And I think our thought work is like that too. Like sometimes we're on that bus and we just have to be like, okay, my brain has not figured out the solution to this yet and that's okay. I'm just going to like ride this out until it does.

So, I don't think it's an either or. I think you can see and see what works for you. I would really dig into why you won't take a painkiller that's on your desk when you have a headache. I think that is the most interesting part of this question to me is why are you doing that? What is your thought? Like, is your thought that you deserve to suffer? Is your thought that like it shouldn't be a big deal? Is your thought that like you're weak if you take it? There's something going on there for you. I don't know if it's related to the struggle bus exactly, although I think you're kind of linking them, but I would really dig into that. Like, why are you doing that? Why are you indulging in misery?

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So, that's my answer to that. And I think you're right, sometimes when you're on the emotional roller coaster, yeah, you can't do the thought work as well then. That's why processing and accepting emotion is always the first step. And sometimes you got to accept that you're on the struggle bus for a little while too. That's okay. It's still driving you somewhere.

All right, y'all, I know you're as tired as I am of having the top podcasts in wellness or health and fitness categories be a bunch of dudes who don't know anything about socialization and who are not taking women's lived experiences into account. So if you are looking for ways to support the show and more importantly, make sure the show gets to more people, please leave us a review on Apple Podcast or Spotify. And bonus points if you include a few lines about the way you use thought work and self-coaching or anything you've learned from the podcast in your daily life. Those reviews are what teach the algorithms to show us to more new people. It helps us get new listeners all over the world. And I'll be reading one story from a recent review in each of these question and answer episodes.

Today's review is from Rainbow Farm Girl. First of all, I want to visit that farm. And the subject line is, this podcast changed my life: "Yes, seriously. I'm so grateful I found this podcast and Kara's work. I have been white knuckling through my life, feeling as if I was barely hanging on. Through changing my thoughts, I've let go of so much suffering and fear and I filled that space instead with joy and confidence. Every person socialized as a woman should give this a listen."

I love hearing that this work has helped resolve some of that unnecessary suffering and I want every woman and every person to experience more joy and confidence. So, such a beautiful review. Thank you.

Okay, second question. "This is related to work but also my interests and hobbies too. I changed my mind so often about what I want to do in terms

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of a job. Do I want a new job or to set up my own business or to go back to education? I don't seem to have trouble choosing. I get about an option," I think she means maybe she gets excited about an option, "for a period of time, but once I pick something, I can get restless and start looking at other options instead. I feel that people probably roll their eyes now when I tell them about my latest venture. I do the same with starting new hobbies, books, courses. I would like to stick at something to feel accomplished in one area and to make a choice and feel content with it."

Okay, so here's the good news. You can learn to stick to something and accomplish it. Here's the bad news. You will not feel content about it. The reason this is happening is because every time you have a thought come into your mind that you might want to do something else, you listen to that thought.

When people have commitment problems, whether it's like in a relationship or to a job or to a hobby or to anything else, let me back up. You do want to make sure that you actually want to do the thing. Sometimes we have trouble sticking with something because like our reason for doing it isn't any good really. We don't feel good about that reason. It doesn't actually matter to us. It's just because we think we're supposed to or to make someone else happy or whatever else. So, but putting that aside because you're talking about like, you're not like, oh, my parents want me to do this thing and I'm doing it so they feel okay, but it's, you know, you're like, I'm excited about these things, but then I change my mind.

What's happening there is that your brain, of course, always comes up with new ideas. Your brain has lots of ideas and it's always more fun for your brain especially to be excited about a new thing than to stick with something that it's already kind of gotten to know somewhat or it's getting hard or there's a challenge coming up or it's in a boring period or whatever. Your brain is probably very novelty seeking.

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And so what happens is when those thoughts come up, you think that they matter and you act on them. And that is the opposite of how you learn to practice commitment and stick with something. And it's not going to feel good right away. So you need to change your goal for the short term at least to be, I want to learn the skill of sticking to something even when my brain thinks there's an exciting shiny object over there and that doing something else would be fun.

Right? It's like if you're in a long-term relationship. Right? It's like you're saying, well, I would like to never feel attracted to anyone else so I can always be happy in my marriage. This is probably not realistic. Right? When you are in a long-term relationship with a person or a project or a job or anything else, there will be, yeah, times that it feels amazing and motivating and exciting and like you're falling in love and there will be times that it is boring and routine and annoying and difficult. And there will be times that you are attracted to other things.

And so having a long happy marriage isn't like a thing that just happens to people if they're super lucky and they just never are attracted to anyone else or ever have a fight with their spouse. It's something people create, if that's what they want, through a lot of effort and commitment and not acting on their outside attractions or their boredom or their whatever else. Again, obviously you all know, I don't think a lifetime monogamous marriage is the point of life. I'm just trying to give you another metaphor to think, like a metaphor to think about this with.

What's happening now is that you're kind of like a fuck boy or fuck girl with your projects. You get excited, you start something, and then something else exciting comes along and so you jump ship. And so you have to learn how to stick with something even when your brain wants you to be excited about something else.

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And when you say I feel people probably roll their eyes now when I tell them about my latest venture, maybe they do, maybe they don't, but you're rolling your eyes. Right? That's your thoughts about yourself that you're projecting. Kind of for a good reason. Not that you should roll your eyes at yourself. Right? We want to understand why you're doing this, but you already know when you start something that you're probably not going to stick with it because that's what you've done your whole life, apparently.

Now, that doesn't make you a bad person. There's nothing wrong with you. This is just you happen to be someone whose brain is like excited by novelty and likes to want to do new things and gets excited about new things. And so you have to learn constraint. I mean this is something every entrepreneur deals with. Right? It is a real struggle. You build something in your business and it's working and then your brain is like, okay, let's do something else. Let's like burn this all down and start this new program or like do this new niche or do this new podcast. And you have to learn how to be like, nope. Yeah, I want to, but I'm not going to because I'm working on this. I'm committed to this. I'm going to see this through. You don't always feel content about it.

So I really want you to let go in the beginning of the idea of feeling content with it. Eventually, you may get there, but you need to be willing to stick with something even when you feel bored and like you want to do something else. The last thing I'll say is, you know, you want to look also into the thoughts behind this. I do think some people are just more novelty seeking. Again, I mean it's because of your thoughts, but I just mean like some people are always quitting things because they have like deep fears that they can't do it or they're not good enough or whatever else. So you need to look at that.

Like, for me, usually it's after I've accomplished something, like, oh, I learned how to write a law review article and like, oh, okay, I see I could get a law professor job now. My brain wants to do something else, right? Or

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like, okay, I see I can create a membership and I can sustain it now my brain wants to do something else. So you have to look at that. For me, it is about like novelty seeking. It's just like I have the thoughts that like variety is fun and I want to do new things and blah, blah, blah. And I have to learn how to balance those with, yeah, doing new things in other parts of my life maybe or making the Clutch even better or whatever, adding a small new thing as opposed to just like starting from scratch just to give my brain a challenge.

But sometimes when people do what you're doing, it's because of actual fear of not being able to succeed, not being good enough. And so if that's what's going on, you also need to do the thought work on that or else the motivation to jump ship will keep coming up.

But if you believe that you could be good at these things and you enjoy them, but then you just get like distracted and bored, then what you need to do is learn how to stick with it. And of course there are things you can do. It's worth it to work on changing your thoughts about the thing you're working on and I never advise like spending all a lot of energy and time doing thought work to always feel motivated. I just think like there's a lot of things to do in life and it's good to develop the skill of committing to something you know you care about and want to accomplish and being able to just do the thing you need to do even when you don't feel motivated. Like that to me, that is a that is a like bucket of thought work that pays endless dividends for the rest of your life, whereas spending that time and energy trying to always be motivated about one specific thing doesn't really transfer in the same way.

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

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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.