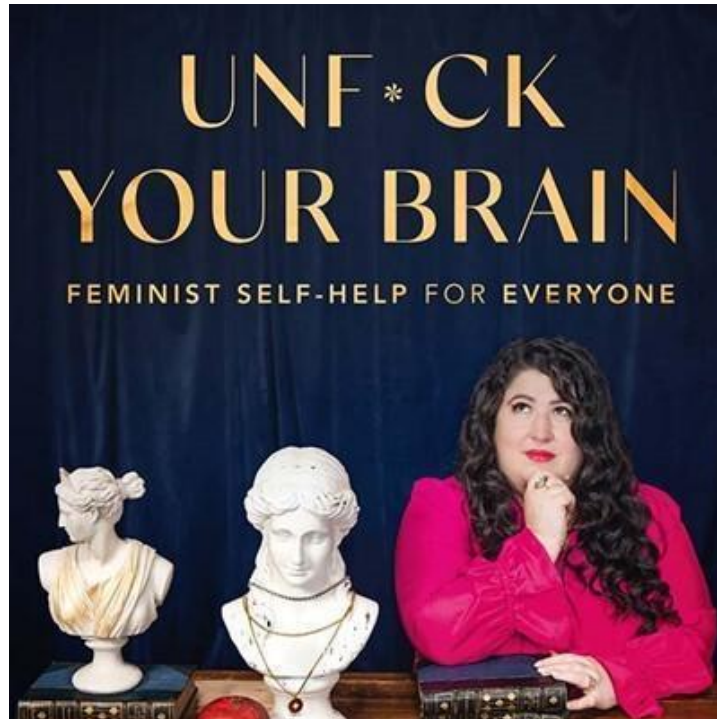


UFYB 409: Coaching Hotline: Epigenetics, Jealousy & Suspicion



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 CoachingHotline, all one word. Let's get into this week's questions.

First question: "Kara, I'm reading a profound book called *My Grandmother's Hands* by Resmaa Menakem. Describes succinctly what's about racialized trauma and the science of healing our minds. What are your thoughts on epigenetic trauma while also holding the thought that the past is only real in the way that our brain remembers it?"

So, it's a great question, and actually, that book is on my list. I have not read that particular book, but my thought about epigenetic trauma is my thought about any other scientific premise or diagnosis that we decide to put in the circumstance line. If somebody is prone to depression or anxiety. I mean, that's a little vague to say prone, but what do we mean by that? It runs in the family, right? They have a genetic predisposition. There are multiple people in their family tree who have depression, you know, symptoms or had anxiety.

Or if somebody is prone to breast cancer, right? We'd say like statistics show that 64% of people with this gene mutation develop breast cancer by this age, I have this gene mutation. There are plenty of things about our genetics or background that do impact our daily life. And so, I think about

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epigenetic trauma the same way. Now, we don't have the kind of same kind of specificity as being able to say like, "Oh, well, I have the BRCA1 gene, and so these are the statistics on the people with this gene." I can put that in the circumstance line, right? With epigenetic trauma, it's not quite as clear cut usually.

But I think like anything else, especially with a concept that's still a little bit, like we can't know exactly in the same way, those statistics. It all depends on what you decide to think about it. I would never say and never have said, right, like genetic predispositions to certain illnesses don't exist. Like, of course they exist. When we say genetic predisposition, what does that mean? We mean a statistical likelihood that people have calculated.

Same kind of thing, right? If we choose to believe, and it is all still thoughts, there are people who like probably don't believe in genetics, right? Just like there are people who don't believe that the earth is round. Like people believe whatever they want. Some of them don't believe. In any era, there are people who don't believe what everybody else takes to be obvious fact or scientific truth. Sometimes those people are vindicated in the future and sometimes it turns out they were wrong. It's all thoughts, right?

But if you choose to believe that epigenetic trauma exists, you can totally choose to believe that, and you can put whatever scientific study or fact you want in the circumstance line, and then you can decide what to think about it. It's just always like, do you get a good result? Does thinking about epigenetic trauma give you a good result because it makes you less judgmental and more forgiving of certain reactions you have to something? Great.

Now, you might get curious about why you need to feel you have a scientific basis to be allowed to be nice to yourself, right? Or to not judge yourself or to give yourself compassion. That would be an interesting

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question, right? But it might be giving you a good result. And then your thought about it is, I'll never be able to feel safe or secure because of my epigenetic trauma. Then I don't think it's serving you probably, right? We can't really know that's true, and why would we want to think that?

So, I think that it's like anything else, really. I'm really a pragmatist, you guys. Like, what result are we getting by thinking the thought we have about it? I do think, you know, with something like epigenetic trauma, it's like an emerging field. People are learning a lot about it. Still a lot of theory involved. Like, I don't think that we can use it to make kind of, "I will always feel this way," or "I will never be able to feel that way," or anything like that kind of statements at all. And I don't think that's helpful. Why would we want to do that? Right?

So I just think of like epigenetic trauma, just like, you know, the food your grandmother had access to impacts like what happened in her ovaries, impacts your mom and what happened in her ovaries. Like a lot of what happened in the past has some impact on the millions of factors that make up who we are. The question is always like, how are we going to decide to think about that?

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

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one story from a recent review in each of these question and answer episodes.

This is from Telemache. She says, "Amazing with a capital A. I wish I would have found this podcast years ago because it would have saved me so much time worrying about what other people think about me at work and in everyday life. In the first few episodes, Kara does an amazing job explaining how to change the way you perceive things by changing the way you think, which in turn changes the way you feel. So simple, yet such an amazing insight into how to get out of your head and out of your own way. Thank you, Kara. You really have become an important part of my daily routine."

Yes, when I learned that your thoughts and feelings and actions were connected in that way, it really blew my mind.

All right, second question. "My ex-husband cheated on me for 20 years. My current husband works out of town a lot. Anything that he says or does that is out of the ordinary causes me to be very suspicious. Recently, he let it slip that he's been regularly going out, getting drunk with coworkers, including at least one female. He says there's nothing going on between them, but I don't believe him because cheaters lie. I'm suffering terribly over this. I want to believe him and trust him, but I don't. I've been doing thought work, listening to podcasts, doing everything I can think of to find some relief. I'm so disappointed because I thought that the days of worrying about cheating were behind me. I'm so afraid that something is going on behind my back and I won't know about it. I need to know how to get past this."

Okay. So, there's a couple of things we really got to pull out here, right? Your own mind is causing you to be this way because you're being hypervigilant, because you believe that your past husband's cheating

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caused your past suffering. And so you believe that you have to make sure that doesn't happen again so you won't suffer again. But of course, the irony is you're suffering so much right now, and it's self-inflicted.

What you did was you changed your circumstance. You got a new husband and you thought that would change your thoughts. Right? You're like, "Oh, I thought I would never have to worry about cheating anymore because I'm not with that cheater." But of course, that's not what causes your thoughts and feelings. It's your own mind. If you're somebody who worries about being cheated on, then you will worry about being cheated on with whoever you're with unless you change your thought process on purpose.

So number one, you have to let go of this. You're also like resisting this whole thing. It's making it so much worse for you, right? You're disappointed. "I have to get past this." You don't need to get past it. You need to get to know it. All of you who are like, "I want to get past this issue." Why? You need to get to know the issue. That's how you're going to learn something. If I could just magically like take a clicker and change your brain, I think a lot of you might be like, "Yeah, please do." But you wouldn't learn anything and you wouldn't be able to help yourself the next time.

Anytime you're like, "I need to get over this," I want you to think, "No, I need to get into this. I need to get past this? No, I need to turn around and look at this and really get into it. What is going on in my brain? How do I change this?" Get to know it.

So, this disappointment that you feel this way and this resistance, that's going to make everything 10 times harder. So number one, you got to let that go. This is the lesson you're here to learn. Who knows why? This is what you got. We don't get to pick our lessons. I wish we did. This is what you get to learn. You get to learn about trust and jealousy.

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And here's the deeper, most ultimate point of this work. There is no way to control or truly know what your husband is doing when he's not with you. That's life. That's just the truth about all other humans. There is no way for us to know and guarantee that they will not do some shit that they told us they wouldn't do. That's just the truth.

And so you want to trust him, but the problem is you have to trust yourself. We all think that trust means I can believe someone when they tell me they won't do something. And then if they do it, then we're like, "Well, I need to know how to trust them again that they won't do it." But like they did it once. They might do it again. Trying to convince yourself that they won't do it again doesn't work.

And same here, even though it seems like this husband did not cheat on you. You want to be convinced that he won't cheat and isn't cheating. That's the wrong question to be asking yourself. Because right now you think that his cheating or not cheating is what will control your happiness in the future. And so of course you're obsessed with it. That's how brains work. If you say to your brain, "Listen, I'm in danger, and the only way to feel safe is to feel sure he's not cheating," your brain is like, "Got it. So I got to constantly worry about whether he's cheating so that I could try to feel safe by making sure he's not cheating."

But you can never know for sure. Even if you feel sure in one moment, then you won't know the next moment. So, you have to understand that your suffering in the past wasn't caused by your husband's cheating. Some people's husbands or wives sleep with lots of other people and they're like, "Meh, whatever." Even if they didn't know, even if it was cheating and they find out later. I'm not saying that's good or bad or right or wrong. I'm not saying you should or shouldn't have been upset. But so long as you give whether someone cheats the power over your feelings, you will be

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obsessed with trying to find out whether it's happening. There's no other option.

Trusting in this situation for you is not about trusting him that he won't cheat. You may be able to get there, but you have to start with trusting yourself that you will not create unnecessary suffering for yourself with your mind if he does cheat. You have to have your own back and you have to know that your thoughts are what create your feelings, right? You cannot give whether he sleeps with someone else the power over your feelings. If you do, then this is what you're going to get, the result you have right now, right?

So you have to like go back and look at that story you have about the past and see how it was your thoughts that caused your suffering. That doesn't mean you shouldn't have thought those things or that you shouldn't suffer. You might want to feel sad or mad if someone cheats on you. But it's so important to understand that it's you creating those thoughts. And I'm going to guess that because you're so terrified about this, there's a lot of self-shame and blame going on about your past relationship that you're afraid of happening again.

Like, you're afraid that he will cheat and you won't know about it, and then you will be mean to yourself. And then you will tell yourself that you should have known and you're such a fucking idiot and of course someone cheated on you because you're whatever your mean thoughts about yourself are. That's really what you're afraid will happen.

So there's a lot of layers to this work. You're going to have to work through this multiple levels. But stop resisting it, stop blaming your current husband, and then stop blaming your ex-husband. You have to take responsibility for all the thoughts and feelings you had in the past, and you have to own that

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whether or not someone cheats is not what's going to determine if you can feel okay about yourself, be nice to yourself, or like be happy in your life.

Because so long as you give the power over those things to whether someone else cheats, like if someone puts their penis where they said that they wouldn't, you're always going to be obsessed with trying to scan for it and prevent it. There's no other 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 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.