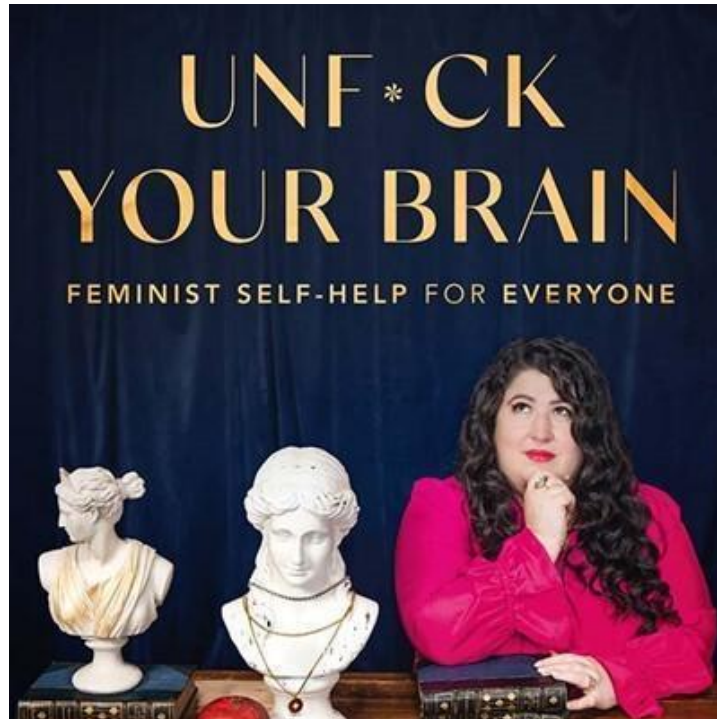


UFYB 413: Coaching Hotline: Goal Thoughts & Anxious Attachment



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 about thought ladders. "I have several unhelpful repeating thoughts, such as I'm a bad person and I don't deserve to be happy or have fun. These thoughts don't create great results, but they're very familiar. I've looked at making a thought ladder, but I got stuck straight away on choosing my goal thought. Because things aren't black or white like that and that black and white thinking is not helping me. It's not as simple as I am a good person and I deserve happiness, because I don't think any of us is truly good or bad and the concept of deserving doesn't sit right. I've sat with this a few times and then just left it. It feels like there's a huge block when working with these old familiar thoughts. Can you help with building a ladder? Is that a total cop out?"

Not a cop out. Happy to help. So, number one, don't just leave it. Right? This is what your brain wants you to do. Your brain is like, listen, I have invested a lot of time and energy in teaching you that you're a bad person and don't deserve to be happy or have fun. I don't want you messing with that. I spent a lot of time on that. So of course, when you try to think something else, your brain's like, no, no, no, I hate it. Stop. So we don't

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ever want to just give up on it, right? We don't ever want to just not coach ourselves because it seems hard or we're not sure what to do.

In terms of how to pick your goal thought, it really doesn't matter. If you don't like the thoughts, I'm a good person or I deserve happiness, like a goal thought does not have to be the ultimate goal thought forever. Like if your thought is I don't deserve to be happy, your goal thought on your first ladder might even be like, happiness isn't a matter of deserving, or I deserve to be happy sometimes, or I'm allowed to be happy, right? It doesn't have to be I deserve happiness all the time or whatever. Or if your thought is I'm a bad person, your original goal thought doesn't even have to be I'm a good person. It could be like, I'm not good or bad, or I'm sometimes good and sometimes bad, right? Like there's no one ladder. Sometimes what is your goal thought now will become your current thought, and then you'll do another thought ladder. Sometimes what is like your goal thought now will turn out to be like a ladder thought on the way to an even bigger goal thought.

So, it's fine if, you know, the couple you come up with don't sit right with you, but then don't give up. Right? What happened here is that you were like, these thoughts don't feel right, so then I just stopped doing it. That's what your brain will tell you to do, always, but we have to override that and not just give up at the first sign that it's going to feel weird or uncomfortable.

Which leads me to the second thing I want to say, which is it's like you're looking for a goal thought that feels good to you, but if the goal thought felt good and you already believed it, then it wouldn't be your goal thought. Right? Like your brain is putting up objections to your goal thought and you're believing those. I wouldn't believe those. Who cares? You're not trying to believe your goal thought yet, right? Your goal thought is just a hypothetical to kind of give you some idea of which way to head. I don't really care if you believe your goal thought. In fact, nobody believes their

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goal thought. That's why it's a goal thought. If you already believed it, it would be your current thought.

So, I don't want you guys to ever be like, I'm giving up on this thought ladder because like I can't figure out the right goal thought. It literally doesn't matter. Just put anything up there, or don't do a goal thought, just come up with like one little step from where you are. But you have to understand like I think sometimes we come to thought work and we're like, okay, well, like my brain's just going to cooperate and when I find a better thought, I'll just believe it. It'll feel great. No, that's not what happens. You have a lot of arguments for your current thoughts.

So when you try to change them, of course your brain is going to be like, well, no, I don't think that's a good goal thought because what about this and that doesn't resonate and what about that? It's going to be uncomfortable. It's not going to seem correct or true yet because you're very invested in believing the opposite. So, you don't want to take your brain's objection to new thoughts as being like, oh, good point brain. You're right about that. Right? You want to be really skeptical of your brain's objections to your potential new thoughts. If they felt really comfortable and true and easy, they'd already be your current thoughts. All right, good question.

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

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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 comes from Bahama Mom Graham, and I love this review because it starts with, "Do what she says, it will help." Yes, that's how I feel too. It goes on to say, this stuff is real, y'all. I will not say it is easy or magical, but since learning thought work and working with Kara, I believe it truly is the secret to life and hence it does feel like magic due to the profound changes in my life. It has taken some repetition and a fair amount of internal arguing happens until I stop and look at the thoughts and then I always find my answer. Kara is generous with her free content, so anyone who wants to learn this can. Enjoy discovering that thoughts, not people or outer circumstances, cause your feelings and how to change your thoughts to neutral thoughts and eventually better, more helpful thoughts that will lead you to a seriously awesome, kickass, unfucked life."

Listen, I want a seriously awesome, kickass, unfucked life too. I know we all do. Thank you for that review.

Next question. "As someone who has in the past had an anxious attachment style, what advice do you give for not letting yourself feel anxious when you don't receive a text reply at night from someone you're seeing? My immediate thought is who is he with? How can I change this thought to something more neutral without still holding the initial thought as an option? Is there no validity in believing all potential circumstances could be true, the good and the less favorable?"

Okay, so I'm going to say that you don't have an anxious attachment style in the past. I think you still have an anxious attachment style, which is totally fine, but you just want to be clear with yourself about that. Number one, I am never ever giving you tips to not let yourself feel a way. Right?

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Our emotions happen. We have unconscious thoughts, we have thoughts we're conscious of but haven't been able to change yet. There's thoughts we don't even know are thoughts. Like your emotions are going to come up. You have to process them and allow them and be willing to have them. The point is never to stop yourself from having a feeling or not allow a feeling. That doesn't work. In fact, it's the opposite. We have to allow feelings. We can't not allow feelings.

The second one is, I think what you're really asking here is like, well, what if it's true though? But that's not the issue. It doesn't matter if he's with someone else or not. The point for you is your emotion. The issue isn't is this thought true? It's what emotion am I getting with this thought? So put it another way. When you feel anxious because you think who is he with? So first of all, that's a question, right? We would never put a question in the model because this is why the model will not make sense. You think he might be with another woman, and then you feel anxious. But you have to ask yourself why. You're right, he might be. That could be a circumstance. But why is that a problem for you? Why do you feel anxious? You feel anxious because of what you make that potential circumstance mean. You don't feel anxious because he might be with another woman. You feel anxious because of what you are making it mean that he might be with another woman.

Even though again, like based on this, you have no reason for thinking that, but you don't have any reason for not thinking it. You're right. It's conceptually true. He could have been hit by a bus, he could be with another woman, he could be with a man, he could be playing Dungeons and Dragons, he could be at a saxophone concert, he could be asleep. Right? Any of these things are possible. He could be doing anything.

The question for you is why are you having an emotional reaction to some of the things you imagine he might be doing and not others? And what are

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you making it mean? And I'm not saying it's bad, right? I'm not saying you shouldn't have emotions. But it's sort of the wrong question to ask yourself, well, what if it is true? Because you're sort of implying like, well, if it is true, then I would need to feel anxious and should feel anxious. But no, your anxiety is not about where he actually is. Your anxiety is about what you will make certain answers to that question mean. If he's with another woman, you are going to make that mean a set of things about you and him and the relationship and that's what you're anxious about. You're anxious about the emotions you're going to have, the things you're going to think and feel if he turns out to be one place versus another.

Okay? So it really doesn't matter if the circumstance is true. That's not the issue. The issue is what are you afraid of feeling? What are you afraid of thinking that you anticipate you will have to think and feel if he's with somebody else when you text him instead of texting you back? I will talk to you next week.

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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.