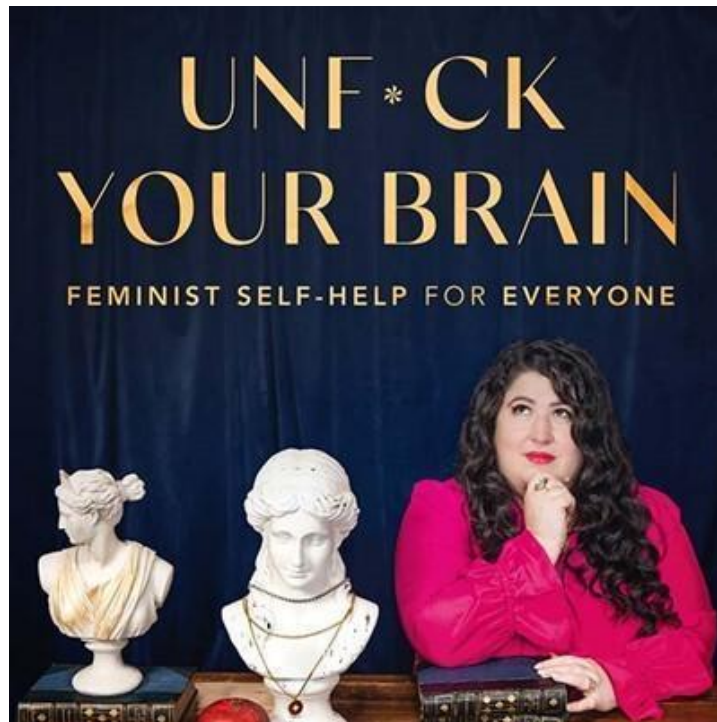


UFYB 417: Coaching Hotline: Codependency & Anger



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.

So, these questions are both about relationships, but in very different ways.

So the first one is, "I have a thought that tells me I should not want to see my partner all the time and that I should want to be alone more than I actually want to. This thought makes me feel anxious and concerned that I'm placing all my happiness in my partner's hands or time for me. He loves his alone time and values it highly. How do I learn to value my time alone above time with my partner?"

Okay, so there's a lot of directions to take this coaching, but I really just want to start with this. Anytime you tell yourself that you should think or feel differently than you do, you are just asking for trouble. That is never going to be helpful. One of the reasons you feel anxious is that you're telling yourself that your thoughts and feelings are wrong and they should be different.

And then you can't coach yourself with the goal of I should value this more than this. That doesn't work. When you do that, what's happening is you think you've identified, and this is so important for all of you, whether you're you think it's about relationships or not. You think you've identified

UFYB 417: Coaching Hotline: Codependency & Anger

something wrong with you. You feel anxious because you think there's something wrong with you. Then you want to use coaching to fix the thing that's wrong with you so that you won't feel bad about yourself or anxious anymore.

But you're trying to use coaching as an instrument to fix the thing that's wrong with you to feel better. That's not how it works. Okay? It's not going to work that way. It won't be effective. You've already prejudged this where you're like, I should feel and think differently, so how do I use thought work to make myself do it? Thought work is not a blunt cudgel to hit yourself over the head with.

Thought work is an inquisitive tool. It is curiosity to learn more about what's going on in your mind and see if you want to change it. You can't prejudge it, like I have to get to this destination so that I don't have to think this negative thought about myself. That's not how it works. So, you got to back up. I do think you would be served by being curious about why you value time with your partner more than yourself. That's a useful question, but not from the place of I must learn not to do that.

Not from the place of I should want to be alone more than I want to. You're just confusing everything by introducing shame and anxiety about what's wrong with you into this whole other question. Your partner has his own thoughts about alone time. You have yours. You have to start with accepting, okay, these are my thoughts and feelings right now.

Right now, I want to see my partner all the time and I don't want to be alone. Let me be curious about that and see why and see if I like those reasons. There are people in the world who want to be with their partner all the time. If you've done your thought work on it and you feel good about your reasons for that, go to it, and you can probably find someone else who wants to. Or you could feel good about your reasons, understand your partner doesn't share those thoughts and be like, this is worth it. I'm going

UFYB 417: Coaching Hotline: Codependency & Anger

to be in this relationship even though I don't get what I want in this area. Or you might end up deciding, oh, I think my desire to be with him all the time is actually being driven by thoughts and feelings that I don't really want to keep. Let me work on those. Like any of those outcomes or a million other outcomes could come out of the thought work.

But you can't figure any of that out when you're telling yourself that you shouldn't feel or think the way you do and you have to change it so that you don't have to feel bad about doing something wrong. And that's for all of you, no matter what the question is. If you're telling yourself you shouldn't think and feel the way you do, then any thought work you do is completely compromised because you're just trying to get out of the anxiety and shame created by the thought that you shouldn't feel the or think the way you do. You can't actually see clearly about the underlying coaching at all.

Alright 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.

This review today is from Kathy Marie 425, who says, "Life-changing work. I started listening to Kara's podcast when I was going through a difficult time in a relationship and had enough self-awareness that some disempowering but very stubborn thought patterns were contributing to my

UFYB 417: Coaching Hotline: Codependency & Anger

suffering. I rebelled so hard against some of her ideas and teachings, mostly because I was unwilling to believe that other people's thoughts and actions do not cause my suffering.

I was comfortably stuck in a victim mindset that wasn't getting me anywhere because I wanted someone else to blame for my suffering. Kara's work has truly changed my life and provided me with concrete tools to live a life more aligned with my values and be freer from social anxiety, scarcity thinking, and a should mindset. Even when I feel like the episode topics don't exactly pertain to me, there's wisdom to be gained. Go deep and listen to the greatest hits episodes and prepare to watch your brain break so you can restore it, befriend and even love it, and marvel at what you can do."

I love this so much because while I don't personally tend to use the term victim mindset, because I think it's been so kind of misused and overused in the world, it is true that when we think about ourselves as only the victim of our circumstances, we're so disempowered. But when we look for where we have agency, we can feel empowered even when things are really hard.

All right, second question. "I have been building anger towards my boyfriend for the last four years. We have been together for four years. I feel anger when he does things with other people, especially traveling. Throughout the four years, my boyfriend has started to understand my need to feel special and receive validation." Okay, so I'm going to stop you right there.

It's not a need. It's a desire. You want to feel special, which comes from your own thoughts. You want your boyfriend to control your thoughts with how he spends his time. That's really what you want. Back to the question. "He sees it as unhelpful and doesn't see his validation helping anything, obviously, since it's not going to change unless I change my thoughts. This coupled with watching him enjoy other things without me, I get angry and

UFYB 417: Coaching Hotline: Codependency & Anger

all I can think about is how I want to hurt him the way he hurts me. I feel so, so much anger and it seems like it's only growing.

I don't know how to finally reach a decision that he's not a validation vending machine and he is not what is going to make me happy. I've been studying thought work with Kara for two years, and although I feel small releases, this anger is around more and more. I do models when this comes up only to feel better for a short time."

Okay, well number one, if you feel better for a short time, that means that the thoughts that you are practicing do work and you're just not practicing them enough. So I do think you probably need to practice your thoughts more. But you also just don't know these are your thoughts yet. You think he's hurting you and so you're angry at him.

There's really two things going on here. Yes, there's the validation vending machine issue that you want him to validate you. I don't think that's your big problem. I think your big problem is the anger. That's what's really making this unresolvable for you, and I think this is just a little bit of coach intuition because I'm not coaching you live, but I think you've got them combined somehow. I think you want him to act a certain way so that you can think and feel something, but then you're angry and you believe he's hurting you. So it's like you sort of understand that it's your thoughts, but you don't really. You think that when he does something with someone else that hurts you, and then you're angry with him.

I would get really curious about this anger. When we're having a negative emotion, especially something like anger that is getting stronger and stronger even when we're trying to do thought work on it, we need to get really curious. What's going on there? I would bet that you're trying to resist it and you need to allow it. Right now, you're someone who really feels rageful when your boyfriend does something without you.

UFYB 417: Coaching Hotline: Codependency & Anger

You probably don't want to be that person and so you're resisting it. But that is who you are right now and that's okay. It doesn't make you any better or worse than anybody else. We're all fucking crazy inside, right? I'd think you need to work on your relationship with this anger. That's my best thought for you right now is I think self-coaching on the validation vending machine, we can get to that when you've dealt with this anger.

But I think that you have to get curious about your relationship with this anger. What is this anger about? Why are you so angry at him? Why are you believing that him just doing something else in his life hurts you? What's going on with this anger and your relationship to the anger? You feel all this anger. It sounds like it's not releasing ever.

So I think you need to get into that. Like what is your relationship with this anger? I coached someone about her anger at her sister, and the magic part of that for her was really just accepting that she was angry. She was fighting and resisting it so hard and she couldn't make get any traction on changing it because she was resisting it and telling herself she shouldn't feel it.

And when I just gave her permission to be really angry at her sister, it released so much for her. So, I think that's what's going on with you. I think you need to just don't worry about the underlying thoughts right now. Just work on the relationship with this anger. Can you welcome and allow this anger? Can you get really curious about it? That doesn't mean you act on the anger. Right? We don't go to the A-line of the model.

But can you get so curious? I want you to get to know this anger like it's your best friend. Like it's someone you're dating and you're super curious about. You want to know everything about them. That's how I want you to think about this anger. This is your companion right now. I want you to get to know it and be curious about it and allow it, and don't try to get rid of it and see how that changes things for you.