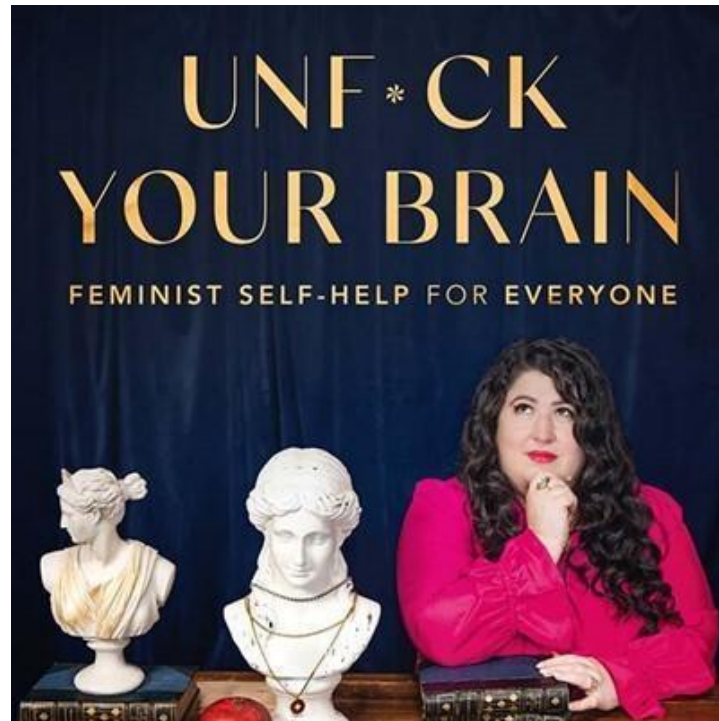


UFYB 423: Coaching Hotline: Are Moods Contagious & When Should We Share Our Feelings



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

[UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil](#)

UFYB 423: Coaching Hotline: Are Moods Contagious & When Should We Share Our Feelings

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.

Here's the first question. "I understand that in thought work, we learn our thoughts create our feelings, and other people don't cause our feelings. I was wondering how this relates to social phenomena or theories like mood contagion. I feel like I frequently see articles and possibly scientific studies that show people's moods, especially negative ones, affect those around them. Is this because of the thoughts we think when people are crabby? Would love some clarification."

So, essentially, yes. I just saw a great meme recently that was like, I'm an empath. I can feel other people's feelings just by deciding in my own head that's what they're feeling and then feeling it. I'm not doing it justice. But you have to remember that every study you see is performed on people who don't know about thought work. It doesn't mean that there isn't something of value in those studies, obviously, and I base a lot of what I teach on cognitive psychology. But when we're talking about something like that, it's your own thoughts.

So, like think about a family member that's always in a bad mood. If your thought is, like I have the thought about one of my family members, that's their favorite hobby is being in a bad mood. And so it just doesn't bother

UFYB 423: Coaching Hotline: Are Moods Contagious & When Should We Share Our Feelings

me. So if you asked me, I would be like, nah, it doesn't really affect me. That's now. If you'd asked me 10 years ago, I would have been like, yes, it ruins the whole event for everyone. Everybody's stressed out. Everybody's upset when this person is upset. Like, it's overbearing, and everybody can feel it. And I would have had a totally different answer. Those are just two different sets of thoughts I have.

So, it's our own thought. I do think like sometimes, yes, we are able, sometimes, not always, sometimes we are correct in our guess about what someone else may be thinking, but that doesn't mean that their feeling creates our feeling. It's our thought about it. So, bottom line, yes. It's the thoughts we think when people are crabby or whatever else it is. It's our thoughts. If we don't care about their negative mood, then we feel fine. If we think a bunch of thoughts about their negative mood, then we feel terrible, especially when we decide that we need them to feel a different way for us to feel okay, or it's a problem for us if they have a negative emotion, then we feel a lot of negative emotion. So, good question. That is the answer.

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.

UFYB 423: Coaching Hotline: Are Moods Contagious & When Should We Share Our Feelings

This week's review comes from Rachel 374, who says, "The podcast is the best. I've learned so much from listening to Kara's podcast, and I'm very grateful that I found it. Her no-nonsense, says logistical"- I think they might have meant logical, but logistical could be the case too- "and extremely compassionate approach has resonated with my brain and allowed me to see opportunities to change myself for the better that I don't think I could have otherwise seen. Thank you, Kara."

I love reviews like this because all of this work is intended to help you all see ways to change yourself that you didn't know were available to you. So it's so meaningful to me when that lands, and I'm so happy to have played a part in someone's transformation.

Okay, second question. "How do we know when it's time to talk to loved ones, partners about our feelings? Last week, I had a few days of emotional struggle bus, and my brain was convinced if my significant other would just act a certain way, have more sex, then I would feel loved and safe. I knew this was a lie, so I didn't approach him in the middle of my emotions. I'm happy with the result for this instance, but I also know there are times I want to talk to him either to share for being vulnerable or to work on a problem together. I tend to think that if I'm trying to talk about something so they will fix it, I'm in emotional childhood, but if I'm sharing to be vulnerable, it can be valuable. Can you riff on this a bit?"

Yeah, 100%. One of the reasons I picked this question was I think that I see this a lot. The perfectionist fantasy is not like a tool that applies to every single situation. It's not a tool that applies anytime you aren't sure about the answer to a question. The perfectionist fantasy is a very specific tool about a specific situation, which is when you have a fantasy that you're going to act a certain way or do things a certain way or be a certain way that's going to be perfect, and that's totally going to happen starting tomorrow or in the future. It doesn't apply to like every single situation

UFYB 423: Coaching Hotline: Are Moods Contagious & When Should We Share Our Feelings

where you might have some ideas about when to do things or not do things.

There's no such thing as the time when you should talk to them, or it's the correct time, or the right time, or the appropriate time, right? There's no rules. I don't make up the rules. Nobody makes up the rules. But I think that what you're identifying as the kind of fulcrum of it, the distinction, is right. If you are sharing with someone else because you think they need to change for you to feel okay, then that's just a manual. You're just trying to control them.

If you are sharing because you want them to know how you feel and you are taking responsibility for yourself, but you want to share that to create intimacy by sharing what you're thinking. Now, of course, that creates intimacy in your mind. They may think, I love that they're sharing with me, and then feel intimate, or they may think, this is stupid, I don't care, and then they won't feel intimate, right? Sharing itself doesn't create intimacy. Depends on what the person hearing the sharing and doing the sharing are thinking.

And I think there's a place of sharing that from a like, hey, I love all these things about our relationship. This one doesn't work for me, and it is a dealbreaker if it's going to stay this way. I don't need you to change for me to be happy, and I'm not telling you that you should change or there's anything wrong with the way you are. I'm just telling you what I'm up for. If you decide that you would like to change your behavior so that we match up better, I would welcome that. But that is totally up to you.

That is very different from how most people do it, which would be to tell the person why there's something wrong with them for only wanting to hang out once a month, how not normal that is, how it's making you feel bad, how they need to change so you can feel okay. The point of thought work isn't you never ask someone else to change their behavior. You can totally ask.

UFYB 423: Coaching Hotline: Are Moods Contagious & When Should We Share Our Feelings

The point of thought work is you know that your emotions are not created by whether they change their behavior or not.

And that you are the one who's responsible for your own thoughts and feelings, and that there's nothing wrong with the way they are. Such a huge part of this is approaching these conversations in a way where you are not criticizing the other person. You're taking responsibility for your own thoughts and feelings. And you're not taking on any criticism they have of you. It's like you have the appropriate emotional boundaries where you are not showing up to tell them there's something wrong with them, and you're not showing up to be told there's something wrong with you, right? You're showing up to share your experience, hear what theirs is, and see if you can find a way forward in a way that no one is to blame and no one is wrong for being the way they are or having their different thoughts and feelings.

So, that is the answer. Anytime that you feel like somebody has to agree to do what I want or change the way they are so I can feel okay, that's when you're in emotional childhood. It's not a perfectionist fantasy. Okay? It's just emotional childhood. You want the other person to change how you feel, and they can't do that.

But when you're in emotional adulthood and you're taking responsibility for your thoughts and feelings, there's quite a lot of reasons you might share them with someone: to practice being vulnerable, to practice telling the truth, because you just want them to know what you're thinking and feeling, even though you can't control how they're going to receive that, because it feels in integrity with you to speak up about something, because you want to see if you two can get closer together on something where you disagree. There's a lot of different reasons. There's no manual for when you should or shouldn't talk to someone. I'll talk to you next week.