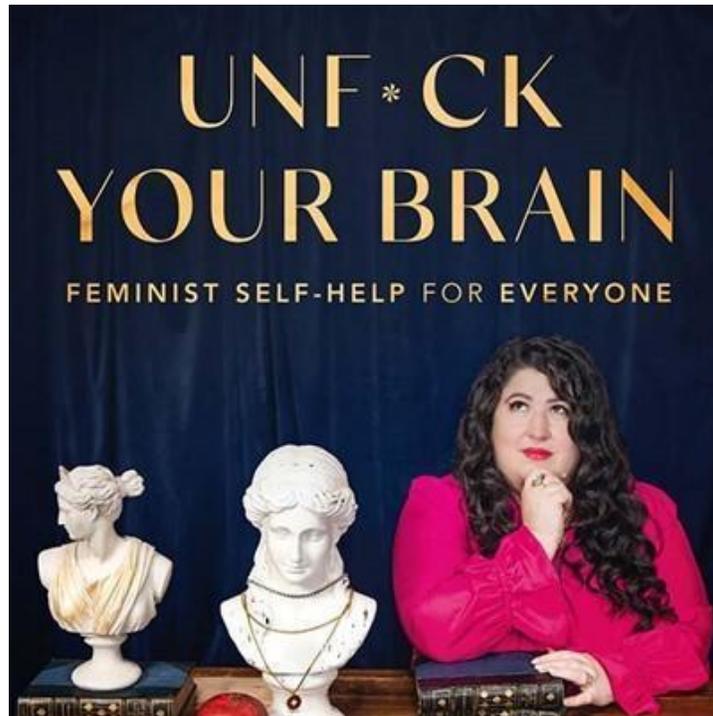


**UFYB 425: Coaching Hotline:
Resisting Pleasure or Not Enjoying It**



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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UFYB 425: Coaching Hotline: Resisting Pleasure or Not Enjoying It

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. "Every time I'm doing almost anything, mostly pleasurable but also work-related, my mind is on to the next thing or other things I could be doing. Not only I don't get that done, but so much time gets wasted in that struggle. And of course, joy is completely sucked out of the moment. How can we learn to be more with the task we are doing and learn to be present with that thing? I think that's where joy is to be found too, not necessarily in the task itself, but in presence."

So, I think this is a really common issue, which is why I want to answer this question. And I think there's a couple of things that go into this. The first one is you do need a system for getting things that need to be done that occur to you out of your head and onto paper. So your brain is not really equipped to remember more than about three things at once.

So if you don't have a system and you're constantly trying to remember to do 10 things that you like haven't written down anywhere, it is going to be very hard to focus on anything because you've given your brain a task, which is remember these things. Your brain is not really equipped to do that. And so it's constantly cycling through the things it's trying to remember because you told it to remember the things.

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So, that is why I teach the organizational system that I teach. One of the big premises of which is you have to have an inbox, wherever it is, electronic physical, where you just jot down anything that comes to mind, whenever it comes to mind, and then you process that consistently so that your brain can start to rest, right? Your brain knows, oh, I have a system. I'm going to write this thing down here. I know that we're going to check it at 5:00 p.m. to go through it, and so I don't have to think about it anymore.

So, that's sort of a brain hack. It doesn't resolve the major underlying issue, but you can't learn to be present and peaceful without that, I think. So you sort of do need that hack in place. Assuming you've done that, and so what's really going on is actually just worry. Or, I think there's two things it could be. This probably should be a whole podcast episode. One is sometimes we are worrying about the future, and then sometimes we are looking forward to something in the future.

So depending on either one of those, the fix may be a little bit different, right? If it's anxiety, you may need to coach yourself on the anxiety. If it is looking forward to something you think will be more pleasurable, you have to coach yourself around that thought, right? The belief that the future is going to be more pleasurable.

What I do is I have a thought that I practice that is like, it's kind of along the lines of my life is wherever I am right now. Right? That reminds me. Like when we're looking forward to something pleasurable, all we're looking forward to is an emotion we think that circumstance will create, which it won't be created by that circumstance. It'll be created by our own thoughts. Right? So we're just like, oh, can't wait till Tuesday when I predict that my brain will think a thought that feels good. We're looking forward to feeling present in the future.

So we have to learn how to feel present now. I think this is a practice. It's just like in meditation, you return to the breath. I think you have to return

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your awareness and presence, like your consciousness to the present moment. And I think that is a practice. You can practice thoughts, you can coach yourself if there's anxiety stuff going on, but it also is just a practice. The ability to think ahead is what allows humans to develop civilization, that prefrontal cortex, right? It's amazing in a lot of ways.

But we can get stuck living there, and then we miss out on our whole lives because we're always thinking about the future. And so we have to develop the practice of paying attention to what's happening now. Where's my body in space? What is around me? What do I feel? I find pleasure is a very grounding, orienting way of doing this. So if I am trying to be present in a present moment, I will bring my awareness to my body or to something, the sky outside, the grass outside, something in my house that I like to look at. Like whatever it is, bringing my awareness to my physical being is how I practice staying in the present moment.

So, that was a great question. I think I actually, I will do an episode about this because I could spend 15 minutes talking about each part of that. But that is the basic overview, I think.

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.

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This week's review is from someone with a great handle, Sorizzo. And they say, "Life-enhancing podcast. Wow. I feel absolutely seen by Kara. This podcast gives you the opportunity to evaluate your life and the way you think. Just by listening, I've reshaped how I think around certain topics and have bettered relationships because of it. 10 out of 10 recommend."

What I love about this review is that this listener is actually applying what I'm teaching. She says it's or they say it's just by listening. But in fact, their brain is like processing what I'm saying and applying it to their own life, which is what I want all of you to be able to do with the podcast. So I'm so glad to hear that it's helped them better their relationships.

Here's the next question. "As I've been trying to make time for pleasure every day, I'm finding a lot of resistance to actually doing things that bring me true pleasure. I've tried a lot of different things to see what brings me pleasure and I think I've settled on some things that really do. Some of it is definitely perfectionist fantasy, but the more dominant feeling is anxiety about doing the thing when I should be doing other things. I know sometimes we need to do the thing that feels terrible anyway, but the anxiety is so high for me that I think I'm ruining the things I know that I enjoy. Is this possible? How can I use thought work to help?"

So yeah, it's 100% possible. And the way you use thought work to help is you need to work on those thoughts that you should be doing other things. Right? This is really common. This is why we often don't take time for pleasure. And for some of us, those thoughts are so intense that even when we do, they kind of can ruin the experience for us. So I don't think it's about forcing your way through because you're not experiencing pleasure then.

But it's also not about just giving it up, right? It's about doing thought work on those shoulds. And you need to be practicing thoughts about being allowed to experience pleasure, being entitled to experience pleasure, it

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being natural to experience pleasure, like whatever thoughts you want to use. Don't just jump to the intentional thoughts. You need to look at those unintentional thoughts. Like you have should with stars on it, not quotation marks, which I think is so interesting, right? I'm not even sure that you know that the thought that you should be doing something else is an optional thought. It is completely made up.

Like no one in the world is in charge of what you should be doing at any given time. There's no such thing. People will have so many different ideas about what you should be doing. Some of which you would never even consider and some of which you just assume to be somehow true.

So you really need to do some self-coaching on what are these should thoughts about? Why do you think you should be doing other things? What are the other things? Is it like specific other things that come up all the time in your brain? Why does your brain think you should be doing those things? Is it just anything? Like your brain will come up with anything for you to do so you don't relax and feel pleasure. Like you've got some thought work to do around productivity and worth and value and taking time to not be working, right? Or not be doing productive things or domestic things or whatever else it is.

And then for some people it's like, okay, well I should be using my off time in some kind of self-improvement or some kind of like virtuous hobby, right? So you got to really unpack all of the moralizing that you're doing around those shoulds that you have. The answer is not to just do it because and even though it feels terrible when it comes to pleasure. Yes, do it even though it feels a little uncomfortable.

But if it's like sky high anxiety, I don't want you to stop doing the pleasure, but I do want you to do this thought work around why you have so much anxiety about doing things you enjoy and really identifying the specific thoughts that are your problem thoughts and doing some models on those

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and working on shifting those thoughts to allow yourself to experience a little more pleasure each time and build it up.