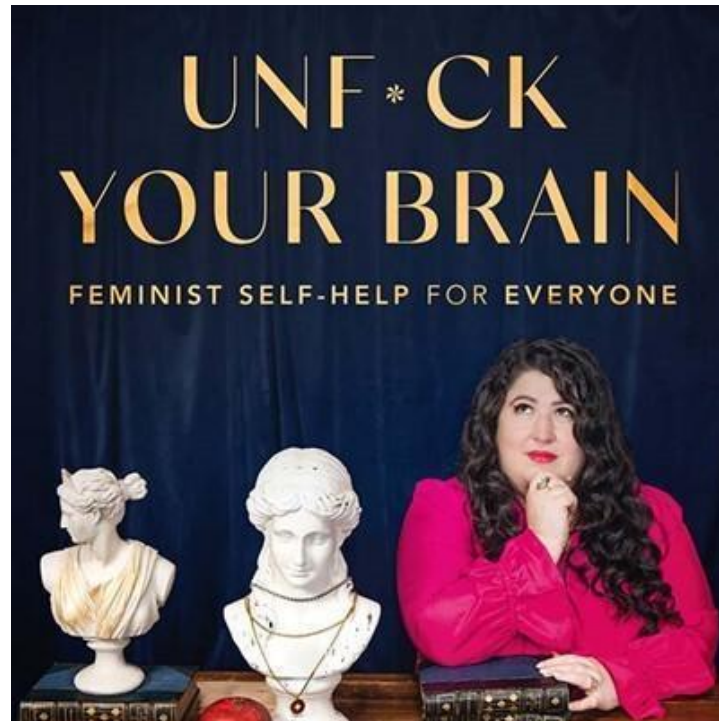


## UFYB 429: Coaching Hotline: How to Handle “Bad Behavior” From Your Partner



### Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Kara Loewentheil**

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

## **UFYB 429: Coaching Hotline: How to Handle “Bad Behavior” From Your Partner**

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](http://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, this week's questions are both kind of about our relationships with other people.

Here's the first one. “How do I stop being so angry with my romantic interest for his lack of availability? I woke up fighting mad this morning, Kara, just fighting mad. This just makes me think of a rooster waking up mad. 5 a.m., 2 hours before my alarm clock. My thoughts are waking me up. I'm angry that he's not available. I'm angry that when I try to end things with him, he puts up a big fight over days, makes it very clear he wants me, but when I'm ‘in his life,’ I barely see him. I want him, I do. At this point I have chosen him. I can reevaluate that decision later, but constantly questioning it was not helpful to me, so I stopped thinking about it. I just don't know how to choose him without thinking I'm compromising my present for a maybe better future. He's told me that dating isn't a priority to him, that his family's business and his music career is. I want to be the kind of partner that can handle being with someone ambitious. I don't believe dating should be a priority in people's lives, yet for some reason I'm making it a priority in mine.”

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Okay, this is a great question. There's a lot going on here. Here's the first thing. You have not chosen him because you have not chosen the him that he is, which is the him that is not available as much as you want. Like I don't know how often he's available. Let's say it's once a month or once a week, whatever it is. If it's once a month, you have not chosen him because what you've done is decide I want to be with him, but I'm not going to accept the reality of how available he is.

You're emotionally resisting it, so you have not actually accepted it. So don't tell yourself that you've chosen him. You've chosen a different version of him that you wish existed. Right? You've chosen him with an asterisk. You've chosen him with, but I'm still mad. That's not choosing him. Now I'm not saying you should choose him. That's totally up to you. But don't lie to yourself about having chosen him, being all in. You're not all in. You haven't chosen him with his priorities. You don't like them. You don't like his priorities. So that's number one. Just don't lie to yourself about that.

Number two, I don't know how to choose him without thinking I'm compromising my present for a maybe better future. So he's not compromising your present. Your thoughts are. Now, this is so important to understand. I'm not saying that you should stay with this person and be fine with it. And I'm not saying you should break up with him and not be fine with it. I'm saying we need to be fine with it in the sense of not emotionally resisting and being angry about the reality. That's the part we want to get to because not being there is what's keeping you from making a decision. This is how we know you're not all in because if you were all in, it would be, I'm all in. This is how much he's available. It's perfect. I love him. This is great. I love it. And if you were out, it would be, I want someone I can see more than this. So it really doesn't matter how great he is. He's just not available for what I want. But you're half and half. You want to tell yourself you're in, but then be mad about what's on offer.

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And I think that maybe part of where you're getting mixed up is these last two sentences. So you say, I want to be the kind of partner that can handle being with someone ambitious. I don't think that's a good way to frame this. His prioritizing dating has nothing to do with whether he's ambitious. And I think framing it that way is making you want to be with him to prove that you can be with a go-getter and then you're telling yourself that there's some necessary correlation between being ambitious and dating not being a priority. That's not true. There are people who are very ambitious in their careers for whom dating or family or whatever is still a big priority for them.

So that's a false equivalence. I don't want you to connect those things because I think that's confusing you. What if you are totally someone who can be with someone ambitious and you want to be with someone ambitious who wants to see you more often than this? In a true preference way, not because there's something wrong with him doing it this way. There's nothing wrong with his availability. You call it a lack of availability. He doesn't have a lack of availability. He just has one availability and you have a different availability. He's not lacking. His availability isn't lacking. It's not less than, right in any like moral sense or like there not being enough. It's just different. You two have different amounts of availability for each other. But you are angry at him about his.

And so I think telling yourself that this has to do with ambition is not helpful because then you set up this option for yourself where you're like, well, if I do break up with him to be with someone who wants more of the kind of relationship that I want, who wants to spend as much time with their partner as I want to, that means that I can't handle being with someone ambitious. And you don't like that outcome either, right, that you're creating in your mind. You don't want to believe that about yourself. So when you link those things, you're setting yourself up for a place where you don't feel like you have any good options.

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So I think you got to disconnect those things. And then you say I don't believe dating should be a priority in people's lives. I don't think that's true because I think that you think it's a priority in your life. So do you want to keep that thought? Because I don't think you really believe that. It seems to be a priority for you and that's okay. I mean, yes, look into your reasons, decide if you want to keep that, but I think these two thoughts are really fucking with your ability to assess the situation in a more neutral, objective way. Because you're like fighting against all this meaning you're putting on it. Like you've sort of layered it with this meaning where if you stay with him, you're going to believe your thoughts about how he's not available enough. But if you break up with him, then you're going to believe that like you can't be with someone ambitious and you don't think dating should be a priority. So you shouldn't make it a priority. There's some knots in there for you to untangle.

Right? You want to be in a place to make a decision here where you truly understand that he doesn't have a lack of availability, he just has availability. And he has priorities and he's told you what they are. Now, do you want to be with someone for whom dating isn't a priority? That's an interesting question for you to consider because it seems like it matters to you. So I'm not sure why you would choose to be with someone for whom dating isn't a priority if it is a priority for you.

So I think you have some work to do that has nothing to do with him yet. I mean, there's some work to do on him, but you've got work to do on you and like these beliefs you have about prioritizing dating and whether people should do it or not. That I think is kind of the root of why you're all mixed up about this. But stop pretending that you're all in for sure because that's not helping you see clearly. You're half in, you want him to be different. You also seem to want yourself to be different and that's what's creating all of the emotional charge here is your desire for both of you and reality to be different.

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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.

This week's review comes from Christen Tom, and the subject line I love is Perfectionist, Pragmatic, Listen Now. All caps.

“I just realized I've been listening to this podcast for over a year. I can remember reading the title and thinking, yes, unfucking my brain is exactly what needs to happen. The way Kara talks about things, the way she frames them and describes thought work has been a huge tipping point for my mental health. Simply put, this podcast helped change my life.”

So I always say like you changed your life. I'm just glad I was able to help. But I love the perfectionist and pragmatic language because that's really true. I have a lot of clients who are perfectionist and pragmatic at the same time and I'm a little bit like that myself. So that is such a good description of the people who benefit from this podcast. Thank you for sharing.

Okay, second question. “Hi Kara, I understand that thought work is about trying to show up in a way we want to in accordance to intentional results we want. But I often misuse this concept to make myself accept bad behavior, I think. I have friends that I think put in less effort than I do, but because I want the result of continuing to show love for them and being

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their friend, I try to practice thoughts that they do care about me and they put an effort in their own way. But isn't there a line? At some point, isn't it me deceiving myself and maybe more thought work and effort than it's worth? How do I find that line?”

Okay, there's no line. There's no such thing. There's no line. You're trying to ascertain like which situations are really bad and which ones you would do thought work on. That's not the right question. When you say accept bad behavior, you put it in quotes, but you really do believe it's bad behavior. So you are not seeing it as a neutral circumstance at all. I'm answering this because this is so common, especially early in thought work, so it's really important to see this.

When you say, "I have friends that I think put in less effort than I do," you think that's a circumstance that you are just observing. So the way you're framing the question in your mind is, I have friends who don't put in as much effort as I do. Should I work on being okay with that or when do I know that I'm just fooling myself? You are accepting the premise that it's true that they put in less effort than you and that means something about their care or respect for you.

Those are optional thoughts. You can't try to decide when to do thought work by accepting your own thoughts as true, like the premise thoughts of my friends put in less effort than I do. That's like a premise thought in this situation. You think it's a circumstance, it's really a thought. And you have some reason you think that matters or means something. And then you're taking that as true also. And then you're like, well, when should I do thought work on these true premises? But those aren't true premises. Those are your thoughts.

That's number one. And then the second thing that I want to let you let break your brain a little bit is like, let's just say it was actually true. Let's say that your friends objectively put in less effort than you. If we could like rate



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the love-o-meter, they love you at an 8 and you love them at a 10 when you do the thought work. It was always going to be that way. Why would it be bad to do the thought work and love them at a 10? You're the one who gets to experience that. I'd much rather love my partner more than they love me if it has to go one way. I'm the one who gets to feel that amazing love. That is just for me. I get to feel it. Right? It's not about, who cares what they think and feel. That's their problem. I get to experience that love. That's only to my benefit. Let this break your brain because this is a brain-breaking part of thought work in the beginning.

Even if we're totally delusional and deceiving ourselves and the result is that we think thoughts on purpose that make us feel loving and amazing, why is that a bad thing? Is it a bad thing? Is that a bad outcome? You have to decide for yourself, but for me, I just decided I was okay, I'm okay with that outcome. Like what if I delude myself that I'm incredibly magnetic and sexy and amazing and I just feel amazing about that, even though most people I meet don't agree with me. I'd still rather think that and feel amazing if those are my two options for going through life.

Right? If I have friends and they like me, but it's like they're at an 8 and I'm at a 10, I'd rather be at the 10. Right? Dig into like why you think that would be a problem. So really don't just assume, when you say deceiving myself as though that's obviously a bad thing. I don't know, is that obviously a bad thing? Why? Like question that stuff. This is what thought work is about, y'all. It's radical questioning. Question everything. You always get to make your own decision. It's not my job to tell you what to do or what to think. But question it all. Make sure you like, sometimes the worst thought work happens when you question like a few of your thoughts, but you don't really question the underlying premises or beliefs. You have to question all of it. Keep asking yourself why until you get to the bottom and there's no more whys to ask. All right. That's it for this week. I'll talk to you next week.