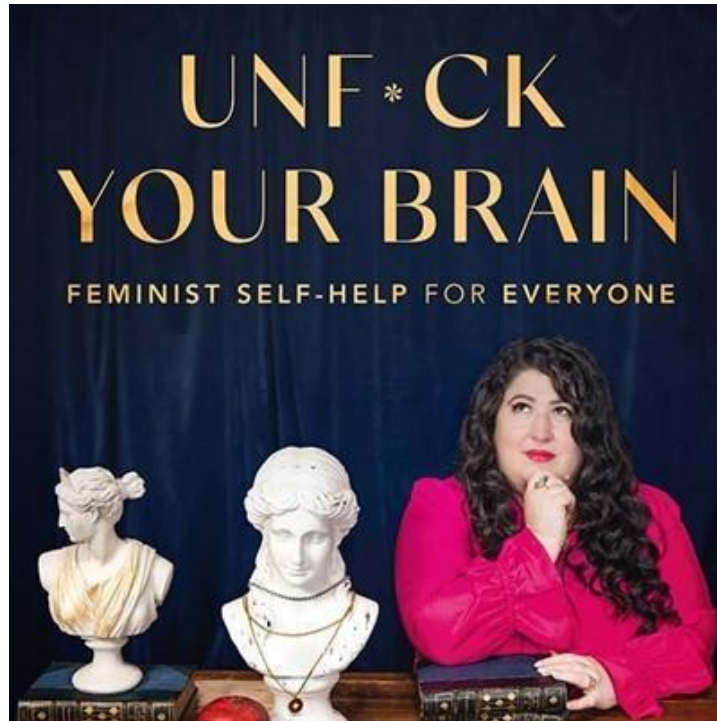


UFYB 436: The Confidence Compass



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

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Alright, y'all. Today is big. This episode is the first in a whole new direction for my work because I have spent the last six months working on the best coaching framework I have ever created. I've taken all the work I've done over the past decade since I got certified, and I've distilled it into a new tool that is simple but profound and that can solve any problem you have. And today, I'm going to share it with you on the podcast for free. So let's get into 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.

You know that saying that the past is new again? I feel a little bit like that today. When I first started my business, I was doing lawyer coaching. This podcast was called The Lawyer Stress Solution many years ago. But after a year, I rebranded because I had so many women coming to me who weren't lawyers. And the very first self-study program I ever did was called the Creating Confidence Bootcamp. Over the years, I've called my work a lot of different things, but I had kind of moved away from talking about confidence because it felt a little bit overdone or overplayed, or just like a word that so many people were using.

But as I've coached thousands of women and heard their stories, it's become clear to me that confidence truly is at the heart of what women need. It's just that we're not talking about confidence the right way. What we need is a more nuanced version of confidence than what you usually hear about. Because we talk about confidence like it's a feeling. It's feeling good about yourself when you walk out the door or having a swing in your step, wearing a great red lipstick, like something kind of surfacey, something superficial, something you wear or put on like a costume or a coat.

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But that's not really what women want or need. We don't need momentary fleeting confidence. We don't need a strut. It's great if you like to strut, but that's not the end all and be all of confidence. What we want and need is to live a confident life. That's a life where we feel confident in our relationships, so we can be authentic and show up as our full selves, and experience love and acceptance that way, and accept and love in return.

A life where we feel confident in our ability to accomplish whatever we want to accomplish, so we can go for our big goals, our big dreams. A life where we feel confident in our decisions, so we don't hem and haw, we don't crowdsource, we don't get paralyzed making choices, big or small. We can live with gusto, we can take risks, we can be bold, and we know that we'll always come out on top, and we know how to support ourselves in the meantime. We want a life where we feel confident in our ability to cope and be resilient, but not just to survive, to truly thrive, where we know we can handle whatever comes without losing our joy, our humor, and our zest for life.

It's a life where we feel confident to live big, live out loud, wear what we want, say what we believe, love how we want to, and create a life that isn't constrained by all the shoulds and good girl requirements that society gives us to keep us small. That's what I want to help all of you create, and that's what my work is really about. And so I came up with a tool that will help you do that.

So without further ado, let me introduce you to the Confidence Compass. Remember on the last episode, I said that confidence is not just a transient emotion. It's really a set of skills you need to master in order to create a confident life. It's a set of skills you need to solve any problem currently keeping you from that life. And here's the thing, you are completely capable of doing this. When we think about confidence as this emotion that's supposed to be inspired by our circumstances, it feels out of reach to us. We feel like we need to keep striving and trying and achieving to get to it.

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And I totally bought into this when I was in my twenties and early thirties until I found coaching. I was always going after the next brass ring, trying to achieve the next goal, the next thing, the next accomplishment, the next, you know, externally set or validated milestone. I got into Harvard Law school, which was the number two ranked law school in the country at that time, and that's where I went, but I still didn't feel confident. And of course, my brain told me, well, if I'd gotten into the number one school, then I could feel confident, right?

I got a federal appeals court clerkship on the Fifth Circuit Court of Appeals, which was one of about 500 or 600 federal appeals court clerkships that are open to the 34,000 law school graduates each year, but I didn't feel confident. And my brain told me, well, that must be because you should have gotten a clerkship on a more prestigious circuit, and then you would feel confident. If you'd gotten one of the top 100 clerkships instead of the top 200 clerkships. Of course, we know on this podcast, looking back, if I had, my brain would have been telling me, no, you need a Supreme Court clerkship to feel confident, right? This never ends.

And this went on and on with every job I moved to. I got the only fellowship in reproductive rights law that was available after my clerkship that year. Then I got one of only a few academic fellowships. I had a fellowship offers from Harvard and Yale, and it didn't make a difference though. And I had the same thing going on in my personal life. I was desperately insecure about my romantic and relationship status and my body, and I believed really deeply there was just something wrong with me or missing about me that meant I could not have, quote-unquote, normal boyfriends or husbands or whatever, like my friends did.

And so I was so invested in changing that feeling by getting into what I considered a normal, quote-unquote, relationship. But of course, that never worked because I had this belief that I was not good enough or I was missing something for a normal relationship. Normal being in quotes because what did that even mean? Who knows? My brain just knew it

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wasn't what I had. And so I did two things to make that belief come true, right? I went after people who were not available for a conventional romantic relationship, or if I ended up in one, I came up with reasons that it didn't count. We didn't see each other the right amount, or we were off and on, or we didn't say I love you fast enough, or we weren't moving in together. My brain was constantly looking for evidence to prove that there was something wrong with me.

I did not have any of these confidence skills yet, and so all of these external accomplishments did not change how I felt. If you look at my life now, you would probably think, well, of course she feels confident. She has this very successful business. She has a best-selling book. She's married to a man who, in his own words, is obsessed with her. She's made more money than she ever thought she could. She loves her body. Like, sure, it's easy to be confident when you have all of those things.

But that is backwards, my friends. I got all those things after I started practicing these skills. I didn't identify them as confidence skills at the time because I was just starting with coaching work. They were just a variety of different thought work tools that I used to change my thoughts one at a time. So I actually was taking the long route compared to any of you who can use the Confidence Compass to get there faster.

But I'm not a special unicorn. I am an example of what's possible when you change the way that you think about yourself. The mental change has to come first. That is what then allows you to change your actual circumstances. And that's because confidence is really a different relationship with yourself. And you have to change that first. You already have the seeds of the person you want to become inside of you. When we think about evolution and growth and self-development, we think about everything we need to change, everything that's wrong with us, what we need to be different.

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But you already have the very beginnings of that person. It's just that your brain has not been paying attention to those seeds, to those beginnings, to those little tendrils of that person. Your brain has only been focusing on what you don't have, on how you don't feel, on what you don't want. It's like you have these beautiful seeds growing little confidence tendrils in a garden, but you're ignoring them, and you're focusing just on the weeds instead. The Confidence Compass helps you focus on the seeds you do have and nurture them and grow them. You don't need to become an entirely different person. You just need to learn how to see who you already are differently and see who you have the potential to become, and then bring who you are now in line with that person you want to be.

So after this quick break, we're going to get into the four skills of the Confidence Compass that will allow you to do that. So, this is the Confidence Compass. There are four skills you need to create a confident life. And if anything in your life is not working, or you are not feeling confident in any area, if you don't know how to solve a problem you're having, if there's something in your way, it's because one or more of these skills is lacking or not being applied in that area.

In the next four episodes, I'm going to be going into each of these skills more in depth, talking about what they are, why they matter, how to apply them. For today, I'm going to give you an overview so you can get familiar with the concepts and the terminology. Alright, we need like a drum roll here. Like it's morning radio. The first skill in the Confidence Compass is self-knowledge. Most of us do not truly know ourselves because we don't slow down long enough to make our own acquaintance.

We know our perceived flaws. That's what women generally think it means to be self-aware. We know our most intrusive anxious thoughts. We know the personality quirks that other people have told us we have, but we don't know what's really driving us. We don't always know our deeper hopes and dreams. We don't know our true beliefs, good or bad, about ourselves and the world because those are operating at a subconscious level. You cannot

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be confident when you don't understand yourself. Just think about when you want to feel confident in someone else. If you don't understand who they are and why they think, feel and act the way they do, you don't feel confident in them. And we avoid this intimacy with ourselves because we're so judgmental about ourselves.

And that's why the second skill in the Confidence Compass is self-compassion. And this is the part that everyone wants to skip. Originally when I wrote my notes, I wrote this is the party everyone wants to skip, and I kind of want to keep that because it is a party and it's an amazing party, but people don't think it's going to be fun, and so they try to skip it. We want to fix ourselves because we think, oh, well, once I'm better, I'll naturally like myself more, and then it'll be easier to be nice to myself. That is not how that works, my friend.

Your brain learns whatever you teach it to practice thinking. If you've taught it to practice being critical of yourself, that's what it's going to keep doing. And many accomplished women, myself included before the last five to 10 years of my life, think that they have good self-esteem but are just very self-aware of their own flaws and the places that they are dropping the ball. What that actually means is that you aren't explicitly abusive to yourself, and that does count for something, but I can guarantee you are still being critical of yourself in the guise of being self-aware. And you are saying stuff to yourself you would never say to a friend or a small child.

It is impossible to create sustainable change in your thoughts, feelings, or behavior without self-compassion. And if you don't know that you can show up in a certain way, you don't feel confident. And the one of the reasons we don't feel confident is that we anticipate how mean we're going to be to ourselves if we don't do something perfectly. So, just like you don't feel confident performing for somebody who's critical and abusive, you can't feel confident showing up if that's how you talk to yourself. So that's the second crucial skill on the compass.

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The third skill is self-belief. Confidence does not come from having what we think would make us good enough. It comes from believing we are good enough already. And that belief leads us to being able to have what we want. It's not woo magic manifestation or quantum vibrations. It is how you feel and act in the world. The belief has to come first. And it does not have to be earned through circumstances or other people's approval or accomplishments, but it does have to be earned by the work of changing your thoughts bit by bit and committing to that process even when it's challenging.

When you think differently, you naturally act differently. If you feel like you are a victim of your brain, like you are trapped with your brain and you don't trust it, you will feel insecure and anxious. To be confident, you have to know that you're in charge of what goes on inside your head and that it can't and won't derail you. Once you have belief in place, the fourth skill is self-actualization.

The most important differentiator between people who succeed at accomplishing their goals and having the life they want and people who don't is self-efficacy. That means the belief that they can impact their lives, impact the world around them, and take action to produce outcomes. So self-efficacy is a big part of this, learning how to set a goal and then achieve it by changing the way you think so that you feel brave, bold, and committed, not just at the very beginning, but even when you fall down along the way. But I don't want you to just know you can do some stuff. I want you to know you can have the version of your life that you barely let yourself dream about right now, or that you have been dreaming of for years, but are always telling yourself isn't realistic or will never happen, or you'll get to it later.

I want you to become someone who is fully expressed, fully alive, and truly living the life that you want to live. That's not something that just happens to you. That's not something you can wait around and hope it arrives. That's something you have to create. And learning how to do that is a skill

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that you can learn, that you must learn if you want to really take advantage of your one wild and precious life.

So my friends, that is the Confidence Compass. Over the next couple of episodes, I'm going to be teaching you about each skill in depth and you're going to learn more about why each of these skills is such a important piece of living and creating a more confident life. I'm also going to be talking about the most common block for each skill, the most common kind of mental block or misconception that you have to undo in order to access and build the skill.

You are not going to want to miss these episodes, so hit subscribe or follow or whatever the relevant button is on your podcast app, and I will see you back here next week for a deep dive on skill number one, self-awareness. Correct, true, accurate self-awareness. See you then.