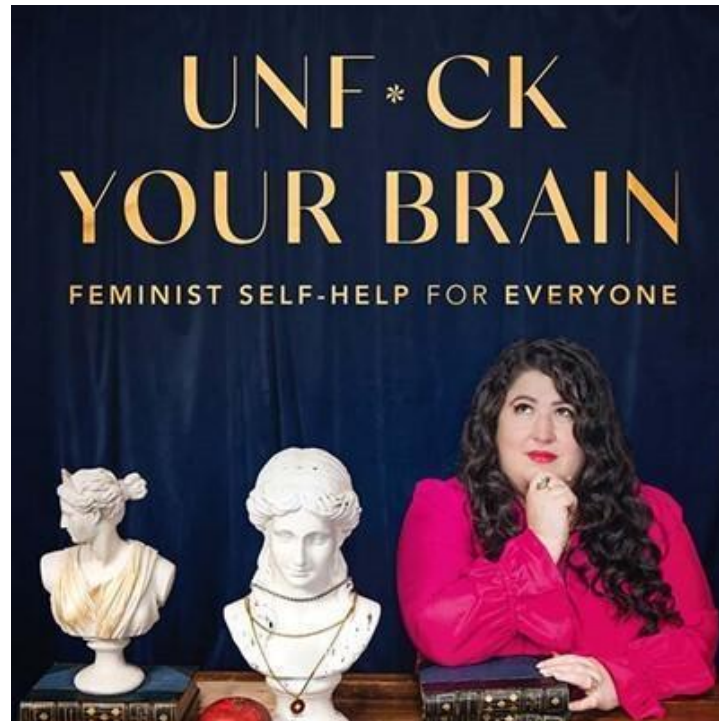


UFYB 443: Coaching Hotline: Doing Something Bigger & A Complaining Diet



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

[UnF*ck Your Brain with 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 our first question says, "Hi Kara, I've made a ton of progress on thought work, but my brain is tricky." Aren't they all is what I would say. Okay, she says, "I know I want something else, quote unquote, something bigger. I have a feeling I could do more, but all of the sudden I'm plagued with indecision about what I thought I wanted and it gets unclear. I think perhaps this is an excuse, but not sure how to begin to work through it. Where to start?"

Okay, so I picked this because this is just such a great example of how we let our brains turn us around and get totally confused. And one of the things I really want you all to think about in your own self-coaching is that the vaguer and more general you are, the less you will have any idea what's going on. So like sometimes people come to me for coaching and they're like, "Well, I want to work on my compassion for myself or my self-esteem or my, I don't think I'm worthy enough." And I'm like, "Yeah, you, me, and everyone else on the planet, right?" We actually can't work on it on this like general level because it lends itself so easily to just whirling around in confusion.

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So when you tell yourself like, "I want to do something bigger, I could do something more, but then I don't know what that thing is." It's like you're living in this land of vagueness and confusion, and you're never going to get anywhere from there. It's not even that it's an excuse because you don't even know what you're asking yourself, right? You're just operating at like the 70,000 foot level. And so what I do when I'm coaching someone, right, is and they're like, "Well, I want to work on my like self-esteem." I'm like, "Great. What's the last mean thought you had about yourself specifically? What was happening? What was the thought you had?"

The same thing here. It is not going to be helpful for you to think in these vague terms. You need to get concrete. So you need to decide like what is it that you think you want? And then like get concrete about that and then do the thought work around that, not just sort of think about it in this big picture way.

The other thing that's going on here is that, and the other reason I picked this question is that you are talking about it as though indecision happened to you, right? And what you want happens to you and things just get unclear. Right? It's so passive. "I'm plagued with indecision. What I thought I wanted, it gets unclear." You're not taking responsibility and ownership for your own mind here, right? You can't be plagued with indecision. What's happening is you are having indecisive thoughts and you are choosing to indulge those. And you're believing your brain. So this is what our brains always do. We decide we want something and we're going to go after it and then our brain immediately is like, "Nah, you don't really need that. I don't think you really want it. Maybe you don't really want it. Maybe you want this other thing."

What you're doing, letter writer or question asker, what we all do is we like turn around and make out with our brain about that. We're like, "Oh my God, really? Maybe I don't really want it. Good point, brain. Gosh, now I'm so confused." You're listening to your brain about that. What you want does

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not just happen to you, right? Your preferences aren't just random. They're caused by your thoughts. Now, mostly they're caused by your unconscious thoughts, but if you decide you want something and you want to go after it, then you have to commit to that. And what that means is not engaging and believing your brain when it starts to tell you that it's changed its mind.

We're like, "Well, now I don't know what I want."

You have to decide what you want, and then you have to commit to pursuing that and not believe your brain when it starts to tell you that it's changed its mind. Okay? So that's the other reason that you are really stuck, is that when your brain tries to change its mind, has thoughts about not wanting the thing anymore, you believe that. And then of course, you're like, "Well, I don't know, it's unclear. Like I think I want something and then my brain tells me I don't want it and then I'm confused." As opposed to I'm deciding what I want on purpose and I'm not going to change that, right? It's taking ownership for what you want as an emotion created by your thoughts that you control.

That's what's missing from the way you're thinking about this. And it's such a good question because a lot of people struggle with this. You probably need to listen to that like 12 times. It's something that a lot of people have a lot of trouble with. Because we're so used to thinking about what we want as just being like, it's like the weather. It's what I want, right? Or what I don't want. But no, we create that with our thoughts. And if we want to commit to wanting something, going after it, we have to know that our brain will tell us we don't want it and that it's changed its mind, and we have to be able to ignore that.

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,

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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.

Today's episode has another wonderful username. This one is from Otter Delight. I personally love otters. We had one in our creek upstate the other week and it was like the highlight of my life. Anyway, this review is from Otter Delight and the title is Game Changer. It says, "I discovered Kara a few years ago when I was in an unhealthy relationship and couldn't get myself to leave. Through her podcast and program, I learned to think differently and I learned to change my thoughts. My favorite tool I learned is the thought ladder. I use it all the time. This podcast has been the most influential podcast I have listened to, and I have listened to a lot of them. I have had so many aha moments listening to Kara. She is phenomenal. Thank you so much, Kara, for all you do. As a solo mom, I credit much of my sanity and happiness to you." I always say to y'all, like you changed your own life. I just am glad that I was able to help and support that process.

Okay, second question. "You mentioned in a podcast episode that when you spend time with people who do not manage their mind, you notice that they complain a lot. I often find myself either fighting or giving into the urge to complain about my boss and coworkers. I'm afraid to call them out in the moment, but I can't wait to go home to my partner and tell my side of the story. I don't think this makes me fun to be around and it's an unprofessional and unproductive way to deal with conflict. What causes people with unmanaged minds to complain a lot and how do I break this habit?"

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Such a good question. I don't know that it matters so much what causes us to do it, right? We could just decide to stop. Human brains have a negativity bias. I've talked about this on the podcast, right? Evolutionarily speaking, it's much more important to remember what the poison berries look like than to remember like what the non-poison berries look like, right? So we have a bias for negativity, which means that our brains remember negative experiences, quote unquote. I'm putting that in quotes because of course, an experience isn't negative, it's just your thoughts and feelings, more than positive ones.

So I think that our brains have a bias for the negative, but I think that when we are complaining, part of what's going on is that we think that if we get other people to agree with us, it will somehow make us feel better. So we want to like tell our sob story to other people and we want them to agree about how awful it is, and we think that's going to make us feel better. And it does for a minute because it's like validation, but it doesn't feel good long term, right? It's just like why I don't recommend like venting. It doesn't really do anything and it actually makes you feel worse ultimately.

So I think those are the two reasons, but the real reason I picked this question is to say that I think what causes this is like not a useful question. And that's kind of more of certain forms of therapy I think would be like more about like, "Well, why do you do this?" And I just don't know that's so useful. I really prefer, like sometimes if you're really stuck on something, it can help to go look at why you're so attached to it or where you got that idea. But generally, I just think let's work on the thoughts now. Like if we know that complaining doesn't really feel good to you and you want to change it about yourself, who really cares why you're doing it? Let's just learn to stop.

And you say, how do I break the habit? So how you break the habit is you start paying attention to when you're complaining and you stop doing it, right? So just start bringing awareness to it. Like pay attention. Why are

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you so excited to go home to your partner and tell your side of the story, quote unquote? Why do you want to tell your partner this story? What do you think you're going to get to think or feel based on whatever, telling them or how they respond? Ask yourself that. And my suspicion is that one of the reasons that we do this is that if we have a conflict at work or we think other people don't like us or think we did something wrong or whatever, we're secretly afraid that we're the problem or we did something wrong or we're bad. And so we want to tell the story and get other people to agree with us that the boss and coworkers are the bad ones or the mother-in-law is the bad one or the friend is the bad one, whatever. We want everybody to agree with us that the other people are terrible and the problem so that we don't have to feel bad about ourselves.

So if that's what you think is going on for you, then the way you deal with that is working on your thoughts about yourself. But the whole way we get to that stuff is you just decide to stop complaining and then you start noticing and bringing awareness to all the times you want to complain and what it is you're thinking when you do that. What feeling are you trying to get by complaining? And what is the thought behind that? Like anything else, you bring awareness to the habit, decide you're going to stop, then bring awareness to when you want to do it and figure out why. What are those thoughts and feelings you're trying to have? And then you'll know what to work on.

It's a great question. I think a complaining diet is an amazing tool for anyone to try. It's the only diet I recommend really. You can even try 24 hours or like two hours if you complain a lot. And it's really fascinating to pay attention to like what actually is complaining that you don't think is. So like, the weather is shitty today. We don't think that's complaining. It totally is, right? We just think we're describing it. Or like, "Oh, it's just work is really stressful right now." We may not think that's complaining. It's totally complaining. So it's just really fascinating to see how often we're

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complaining without even really knowing that we're doing it. Such a common thought pattern.

Go forth. Don't let your brains trick you. Don't complain. See how it changes your week.