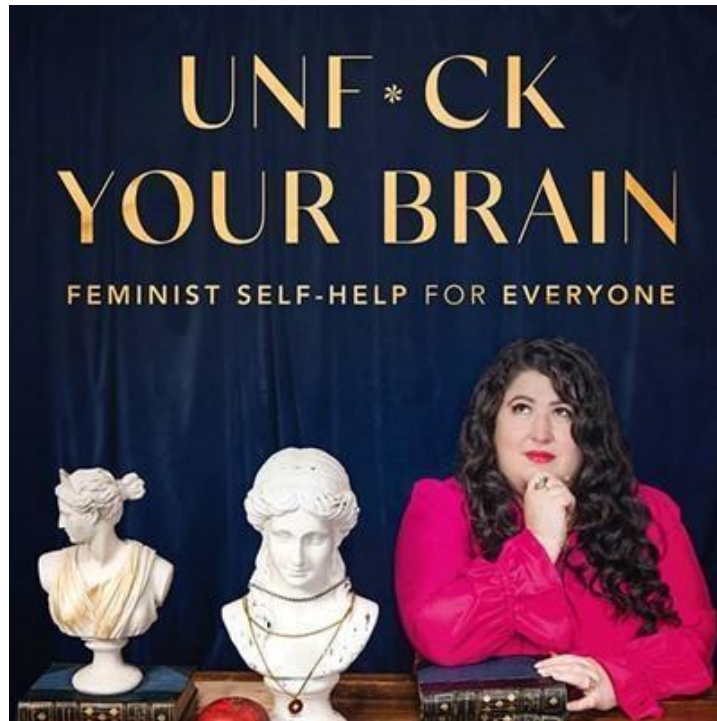


UFYB 455: Coaching Hotline: Self-Doubt in Your Career & Battling Procrastination



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

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.

Our first question is about self-doubt. As are all of our questions really. All right, so here's the question.

"I've had a very blessed life and a fantastic career. I'm now in a high-level position with a new company, and all of a sudden, I'm having serious self-doubt. I never graduated college with anything more than an associate's. I am in a field filled with advanced degrees, and here I am with my lowly associate's. The problem is I have been in senior executive leadership before, but I've never experienced the self-doubt that I am now. I never lied on my resume, so it's not like they think I have something I don't. But I find myself lying to colleagues when they ask over breaks and lunches. Not fully lying because I did attend the college I said I did, I just didn't graduate. I'm so proud of myself for being where I am, but I can't seem to see myself past this."

Okay. So, I think that one of the reasons this is so confusing to you is that you do feel proud of yourself for what you've accomplished, but at the same time, you are still making that college graduation mean something. So you're making it mean that you're not what? As qualified, that you're not

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as smart, that you don't have the tools. Like you have to figure out what you're making it mean.

I see this often with people who have a bunch of thoughts about their education. It has nothing to do with the education, right? That's the first thing to really think about. You have an associate's, so you're blaming it on having an associate's. But I get this question from people who have a bachelor's degree but don't have a graduate degree or from people who have a graduate degree, but they think the school wasn't fancy enough, right? Or they have a graduate degree from a fancy school, but they didn't have a fancy advisor on their dissertation or it's not the same graduate degree everybody else has.

I think you're believing that the associate's means something. You call it your lowly associate's and that's really a good reason that you're having these thoughts, but people have these thoughts who have PhDs from Harvard, right? It has nothing to do with the actual degree you have. It just has to do with your brain looking for a reason to doubt yourself.

And so now that you are in this high-level position, you are making it mean something. Here's what I think is so fascinating about this. It would be one thing to worry that not having an associate's means you couldn't get your foot in the door. But you've been promoted, right? And how do you get promoted? You get promoted because you've done good work. It sounds like you got hired at a new company at a high level.

So you have all this work experience where you've proved yourself and that's why someone has hired you. So it's sort of like saying, "Oh, I didn't worry about my associate's at all of the original points of this journey when it might have actually made a difference in terms of getting hired if the qualifications were one thing and I didn't have them. But now I've done all this work, I've built up all this experience, my degree is so irrelevant at this point, and now I'm making it mean something."

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Right? You understand what I'm saying? When you're just starting a job and you're fresh out of school, all you really have is your degree, so it might matter then. Maybe it does, maybe it doesn't, but it would at least sort of be more logical to think it might. This far in your career, who cares, right? You're so far away from your formal education and nobody's hiring anybody at your stage based on what kind of degree they have, right? Or where they went to school. Nobody's, obviously, they hired you. So it's so irrelevant, and yet you're giving it all this meaning.

So the first thing for you to do is really to sit with the idea that it has nothing to do with it being an associate's degree. People have this thought about any level of education. It's just your brain looking for a hook to hang your imposter syndrome on. And then the second one is to figure out what you're making it mean. Get specific. What do you think you will not be able to do in this role that you would do if you had gone to two more years of college or one more year of college or whatever it is. Given all your professional experience, all your expertise, what are you telling yourself you will not be able to do because you only took Math One and not Math Two, right? Really break it down. I think you'll see that there's no basis for it.

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 comes from a username I cannot pronounce, just a string of letters and numbers, but I love this review all the same. It says, "Love Kara and all the info and insights shared on the podcast. Been listening to the podcast for a year or so, and it's been huge for helping me reframe my mindset on topics I struggle with. So much of what is shared is so relatable, and she does a great job of painting with broad strokes in terms of exclusivity. I can't wait every Thursday for the new episode to drop. Thanks for sharing your review."

Second question, also about work life. That's the theme for this one.

"Hi, Kara. Thanks for all that you do. I love the podcast and have shared it widely among my friends. My question relates to my work life. I work as a coach and a solopreneur. Right now, there's mostly just me, plus a very part-time assistant. I decided that I'm done with coaching as a hobby and I'm committed to making this work my main source of income. This means redesigning my offering and significantly raising my rates. I notice that as I'm working on my website, I feel queasy in my stomach." Totally normal, right? "My mind fills with thoughts, 'This isn't going to work. You're not good enough. You'll waste all this money and fail. You're just one step away from poverty.'

"I can see the results these thoughts get me. My coaching practice is small, and the rates I've been charging would not be enough together to cover the expenses of my life if this is all I was doing. I think these thoughts and so I have so far stayed small. Any advice for how to stay the course? Every day I work on this, I receive a deluge of these thoughts and I spend time countering them, and frankly, this is exhausting. What happens when thought work itself becomes a form of productive procrastination? I sit down to work and the thoughts come and doing models and practicing my ladder thought is good, and yet my homepage copy isn't getting written. I'm not on forms reaching out to my ideal clients. My progress feels glacially slow. How do I keep taking action despite the thoughts?"

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Okay, so this is a great question, and there's a couple things I want to say about it. So number one, this is exactly how it's supposed to feel. And if you are expecting it to feel any different, then it's not going to. It will feel terrible. Being an entrepreneur and a coach and putting yourself out there feels terrible in the beginning.

So this is what's supposed to be happening. I picked this question partly because I do think the thought work can become a form of procrastination. And so here's what you do. You schedule time to do your thought work and you schedule time to write your web copy. And if you have thoughts during web copy time, you don't stop to model them. You just keep writing the web copy. That's really all there is to it. You just allow the thoughts to be there. You're like, "Yep, I know. I spoke to you earlier." Right? Or yeah, I know I'm about to speak to you later. But right now, I have to write this web copy.

So I think you got to schedule time to do your self-coaching and schedule time to do your business tasks and don't interrupt the business tasks to do the self-coaching. I understand why you want to do that. Number one, because you're afraid to write your copy, so you want to coach yourself instead. The other thing is you may think you need to feel good to write the copy. And I do teach that our thoughts create our results, right? So if you're writing copy from a place of I'm not good enough, it may show up in your copy. But that's okay, okay? Because we're not going for perfection, and we have to fail our way to success.

So it is better for you to have those thoughts, allow them, not resist them, very different, right? Allow them to be there, understand that they don't mean anything. Focus on the people you want to serve, think about them, show up and write that copy, and get it out there. And you'll continue to refine as your belief gets stronger over time. You may rewrite your copy, right? You may talk about your business in different ways. You'll make your offer in different ways. I've gotten more confident in the way I make my

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offers than I used to be and so my business has grown. But I didn't need to be 100% confident in the beginning and I wasn't.

So this is really all about your relationship with these thoughts and how you deal with them. If you just expect, of course, my brain is going to do all of this. It's trying to keep me safe. I know what's going to happen. It's like an allergic reaction. I'm just going to schedule a time to take the medicine and then I'm going to know that I took my medicine, so I'm not going to die and so I'm going to do the task.

Schedule time for self-coaching, schedule time for your business. Don't stop in that hour of writing web copy to coach yourself. Allow the thoughts to be there, but don't make them mean that something has gone wrong or there's a problem or they're true. You just have to expect that they're going to be there for now and that's okay. If you knew that those thoughts were always going to be with you, would you want to be a coach anyway? And if so, you would just keep moving forward just knowing that they were going to be there and that was okay.

All right, my dears. Those are the questions for this week. I'll talk to you next week.