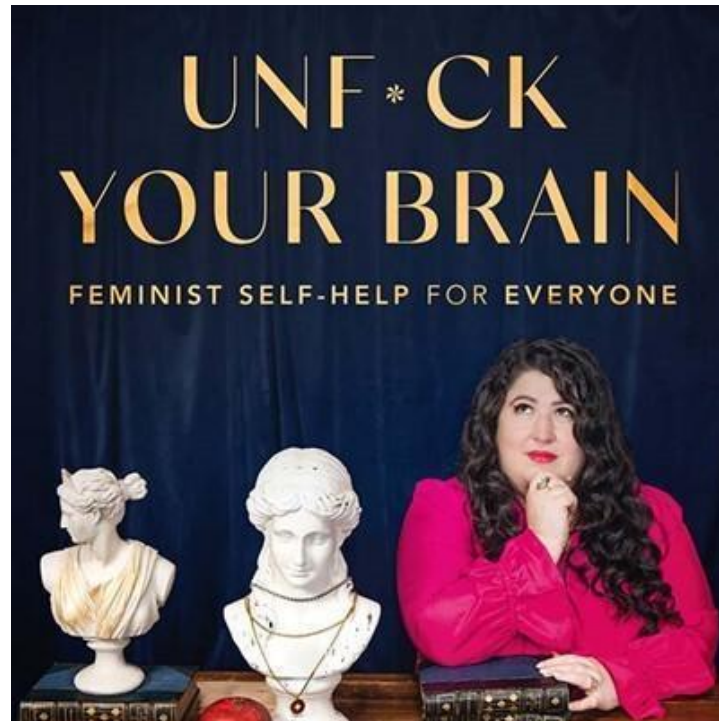


UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

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, today we're doing one kind of conceptual question, and then we're going to do a question about relationships. But as always, all thought work is useful for all of you because it's never about the circumstance, right? So even if you don't share the circumstance, there'll be something in the question and the answer that will relate to you.

Okay, so the first question is, "How do we know when we are fighting a reality that cannot be changed, as opposed to moving the dial forward on something that can be changed but just takes time?"

So, this was in response to the Q&A I did about Theranos and Elizabeth Holmes, who is the woman who basically perpetrated a massive fraud by defrauding investors of all this money and claiming that her company could perform blood tests on a single drop of blood and was going to change the testing industry, and it turned out it was all a lie. So I'm telling you that because in the question, this question asker says, "You mentioned that Theranos could have listened to her teacher." Theranos is the company, actually, so she means the owner. "That Elizabeth Holmes could have listened to her teacher who said it was physically impossible to create that type of blood test, but she did not."

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

“Alas, isn't part of taking leaps and moving forward sometimes about pushing past what other people say is the reality? Senator Barack Obama was not supposed to be able to become president based on centuries of racism in the US. He was too young, he was a politician, and yet he did. He clearly had the thought he could, but lots of other people did not believe he could. He envisioned a different reality. For social movements, the world exists as it does, but people must believe they can make change. At some level, don't we have to believe we can change reality? Or is it more that the laws of biology tested repeatedly indicate a task is not possible, e.g., Elizabeth Holmes and Theranos?”

“For those of us working on calendaring, if we keep trying to sleep four hours a night and operate at full capacity the next day and it does not work, or finish a task in one hour that repeatedly takes three hours, do we need to face reality or just keep trying new ways?”

Okay, so I think this is a great question. And the answer to it, I think, is that it's conflating a lot of different dynamics and scenarios into just calling them all things that seem impossible, right? Which is a really broad term in this sense, right? So I don't think that Theranos being a fraud and Obama becoming president and you trying to fit too much on your calendar are all the same thing, right? Some of those are results and some of those are circumstances. Like, they're all different.

Resistance to current reality is about emotions. So this question listener should listen to the one about sexism podcast again with this frame in mind. What I teach about resisting reality is that emotional resistance to reality actually makes it harder to achieve our goals, not easier.

And what's fascinating is biology is not even a clean line, right? Since I started working on my running, I've been obsessed with that story that I told on one of the podcasts about how until the 1970s, it was understood that biologically, the human body could not run a mile faster than four minutes,

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

that it was like a physiological, mechanical reality. And then someone did. So obviously, even things that we believe to be biological reality sometimes turn out to not be.

So again, anytime you're fighting, it's like almost the operative word in this question was in that first sentence. How do we know when we're fighting a reality? If you are fighting it, if you are resisting it, if you are like struggling against it, you're never going to get what you want. That's part of my point, is that you are going to burn yourself out with frustration and resistance, and you'll accomplish less than you could if you didn't do that. And if that's how you teach your brain to think, even if you get there, you won't feel good enough. Like, I don't think that Obama became president because he was focused on resisting and struggling against racism and all of his people who thought he was too young, right? He wasn't like, "I'm going to become president to show all those people they're wrong and to struggle and resist them."

I think he was able to become president because he was like, "I have this dream, I have my eye on this goal, I know I can do it." So these are all like three different things. When you say Obama wasn't supposed to be able to become president, all you're talking about is other people's thoughts that he wouldn't. So, like, of course we often can do things that other people don't think we can. That's not at all reality. That's just other people's opinions about whether someone can become president.

Another way to think about this might be, sometimes we don't know what the reality is, right? Like, people might have thought that running the four-minute mile was the reality. They thought that was a circumstance. They turned out to be wrong. But the way that someone figured that out was they set this impossible goal and went for it. So I think that like the biggest conflation confusion is in this question is that when I talk about changing our reality, I'm talking about setting big, exciting, impossible goals we want to achieve. And you're talking about resisting and fighting reality.

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

You may not think, question-asker-er, that's what you're doing, but the way that this reads, I think that is where it's coming from at base, and like just that framing of the question is getting in the way of you understanding it.

And then the last thing I'll say is, with something like calendaring, the question there is, why are you trying to do that? That to me is not the same as Obama. It's not the same as the laws of biology to the extent that they operate. I mean, I believe in biology. I meant like to the extent that they're true. Like, we were wrong about the four-minute mile, but we seem to you have been right about how you can't do a blood test based on one little drop. That's why Theranos folded. Or maybe, who knows? Maybe it can be done, but she didn't figure out how to do it, right? The problem with Theranos is not that she tried to do something impossible. It's that she lied and defrauded everybody along the way, right? Maybe it was possible and if she had just told the truth about what was going on, she might have been able to do it. Like, I don't know, right? Who knows? But for sure, the lying and the defrauding got in the way.

Okay, and in terms of the calendar, right, my question would just be, why are you trying to do that? If you know that you have a lot of evidence that your body physiologically needs more than four hours of sleep a night, most people's bodies do, not all, again. Some people don't need that much sleep, but if you're someone who does, if you consistently feel biological symptoms of fatigue when you sleep four hours a night, why are you trying to do that? You don't need to. So the answer is that you are not efficient with your calendar or you're having perfectionist fantasies about how much you need to get done and why. And that's an opportunity for thought work.

So no, I would not recommend that somebody keeps trying new ways to only sleep four hours a night when their body is pretty clear with them that it needs eight. You always have to ask yourself, "Why?" You guys, it's not like any goal you set is automatically good. Why are you trying to do this? Why are you trying to sleep four hours a night, right? Why are you trying to

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

stuff your calendar? Why are you focused on everything you can get done? I try to focus on like what kind of leisure time do I want and then what am I going to get done in the rest of the time? I think that this last example has a lot more to do with why are you doing this thing. And that is like the more important question.

So I think that each of these things has kind of been like linked up when they don't all really have that much to do with each other. But it was a good question because I know a lot of people have this or similar questions or wonder about different parts of this question. So I wanted to kind of talk through them all.

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.

So I have to say, I hesitated to read this week's review because I still struggle with the socialization of being told as a woman not to promote myself too much. But to show you that I will be brave and go first and do things I'm uncomfortable with, I'm going to share this review from PinkV27. It says, "Obsessed with this podcast. I've listened to episodes so many times to really absorb the lessons and keep blowing my own mind. Kara is a genius and an important philosopher of and for our generation. Her work will be renowned for ages to come, but what's most important is listening

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

and improving your life now. Love you so much, Kara. We're besties, even though you don't know me yet."

That was uncomfortable for me. I feel a little nauseous, but I do love that she points out that what's most important is improving your own life, right? What you do with what I teach in your own life is what really matters. And we're all besties, even though I don't know all of you yet.

Okay, next question. On a totally different vein. "Hi Kara, my partner and I are polyamorous. I've just met his lady friend. I have very positive thoughts about her, but when I see my partner touching her and being affectionate, my stomach feels sick. It then becomes difficult to keep my thoughts straight and not make what he's doing about me. My brain has a hard time believing that there's nothing wrong with his actions, and so I find myself retreating and wanting it to all go away. Do you have suggestions on what to do when I'm in the thick of it?"

Okay, so it sounds to me, first of all, we've got the causation wrong, okay? You start thinking a certain thing and then you feel sick to your stomach. It's not the other way around, okay? When your partner touches his other part, his your meta, his other partner, that's not what makes your stomach feel sick. What happens, the circumstance is he touches her, then you have a thought, then you feel sick to your stomach, whatever that is, anxiety, shame, jealousy. I don't know what emotion it is. You got to figure that out.

So it's so important to understand, this is not semantic. It's really important to understand what comes first. If you believe, "Oh, when he touches her, that makes me feel physically bad, and then it's hard to keep my thoughts straight," you're giving the power to him touching her and then how would you ever solve that?

UFYB 459: Coaching Hotline: When to Accept Reality & How to Handle Jealousy in Polyamory

Him touching her is a neutral circumstance. You have a thought about it. That creates sensations in your body. So the work for you is to figure out what that thought is. Why do you feel sick to your stomach? You are making it mean something about you. And that's what you need to figure out. And you say, "Do you have suggestions on what to do when I'm in the thick of it?" I would work on this before you're in the thick of it. You already know that this happens, right? So do some work on it before you're in it next time.

Figure out what is the thought that you are thinking when you see him touch her that makes you feel sick to your stomach. And get a little more specific than that. Like sick to your stomach is not really a concrete feeling. Like, is it hot or cold, heavy or fast, sinking or rising, right? Do you feel agitated and nauseous or do you feel like heavy? Like it can mean different things to different people and figure out what feeling you're having. And that will help you figure out what thought is causing it.

And then what I recommend you do is you practice that, you come up with a new thought and you practice that thought. While you're working on this in the meantime, given the thoughts you already have, if it starts happening around you, I would focus on your positive thoughts about her. But I think you got to unravel why you don't like seeing him touch her, what you're making that mean. And that's going to help, then you're going to know what thoughts you want to practice ahead of time and when it's happening.