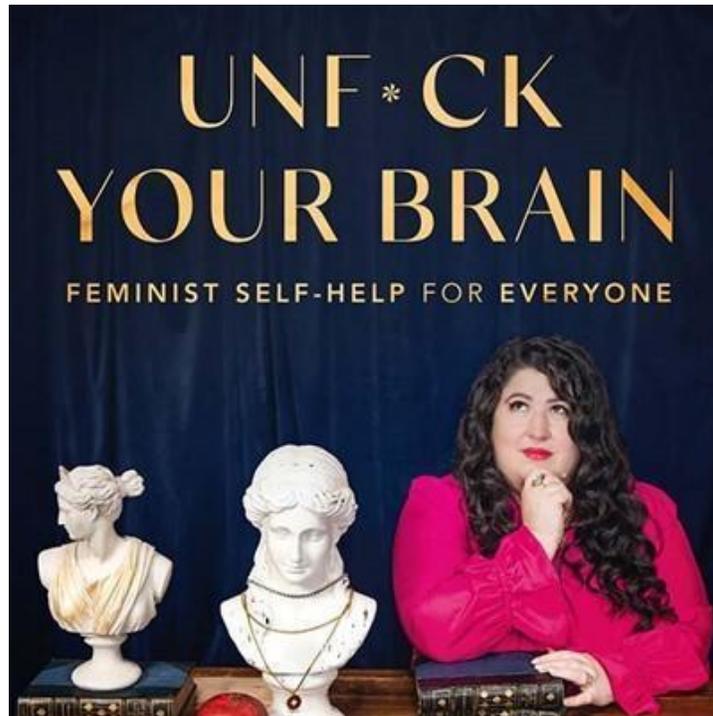


# UFYB 467: Coaching Hotline: Coaching Hotline: Is My Relationship Toxic? & Handling Health Anxiety



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Kara Loewentheil**

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## **UFYB 467: Coaching Hotline: Coaching Hotline: Is My Relationship Toxic? & Handling Health Anxiety**

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.

Here's the first question. How do I know when a relationship is toxic? How much of it is my thinking and how much is truly my partner's actions? For example, one of many. If a spouse doesn't pay bills on time and racks up hundreds of dollars in late fees, thought work won't change that. So how does thought work help relationship issues?

Well, that last part is a huge question, right? How does thought work change relationship issues? So that's in every way and I'm not going to address that exactly, but I want to talk about this question, how do I know when a relationship is toxic, and what thought work will or won't change. Okay, so number one, a relationship is never toxic. That's never a circumstance unless they literally try to poison you. Your thought is that it's toxic. There's no such thing as it truly being toxic or not. There can't be because toxic is a human word that we have made up that people use to describe a huge range of behaviors.

I'll say it's only toxic if they try to poison you. Some people will say it's toxic if they yell at you. Some people will say it's toxic if they tell you they don't like what you're wearing. Some people will say it's toxic if they don't like going to your family events. It can mean so many different things to so

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many different people. That's how we know it's a thought and not a circumstance.

Now, you could choose to believe your relationship is toxic. I don't really advise that because I don't think you get a good result from it, but it's up to you.

And when you say, how much of it is my thinking and how much is truly my partner's actions? The answer is that it's always all your thinking. Because your partner's actions are circumstances. So if your spouse does not pay a bill by the due date and you get a \$150 late fee, that is a circumstance. You're right, thought work does not change that circumstance or make it not exist. But you believing that's a problem and what you think about it, that is all thoughts.

There are some people in the world whose thought about a spouse not paying bills on time and getting late fees is, "Oh, that's adorable. They're so absorbed in their work. I love that I can fix this for them." Or there's people who just feel neutral about it, or there's people who just decide to pay the bills themselves because they know this happens, right? And then there's you and other people, and you're not alone in this, thinking, "Oh my God, this is toxic and a disaster."

All different reactions to the same circumstance. Spouse didn't pay bill by bill date, utility gave us \$100 late fee, or \$900 late fee, whatever it is. It truly is neutral that your spouse didn't pay the bill and now you have late fees. That's just a neutral circumstance. It's not inherently good or bad. It is your thought about it. This is terrible. This is toxic. I can't trust him. We can't afford this. Whatever your thoughts are that create all of your negative feelings.

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Having said that, I don't teach that you are quote-unquote supposed to use thought work to be in any relationship no matter what. And that is a way that my work really gets misinterpreted, I think, no matter how many times I say this. You can always choose what kind of relationship you want to be in. If you decide you don't want to be in a relationship with people who don't pay the bills on time, that you want bill paying to be their job, and you want them to do it a certain way, and you don't want to manage that, you can totally decide to have a relationship based on that.

It's just important to understand that's your preference and you're willing to give up whatever other things to get that rather than believing any sane normal person would do it this way, and if your partner doesn't, then it's toxic and it's dangerous, and they don't respect you and there's something wrong with them.

Because when you are believing all of that they are wrong, then you want them to be different. And then you are constantly either trying to change them or resent them or you leave them and partner up with somebody else and maybe this new person does pay the bills on time, but they don't do something else you want them to do, like they don't wash the dishes on time. And then you got all the negative thoughts about that. If you are believing that circumstances cause your feelings, you will always be trying to control your partner, whoever that partner is. And you might not have to try to control them about bill paying, but you'll end up trying to control them about something else.

So really, I can answer the big question, right? Thought work helps relationship issues because your only issue is your own thoughts and feelings. That's your only problem.

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

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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 Benneger, who says, "Life-changing. Kara is amazing. I have found her approach to thought work practical and actionable, and it has created existential change. It is modern philosophy for humans socialized as women. It has been so freeing for me to get to decide what I think and do and let go of the should have socialization. Thank you, Kara."

Thank you for sharing your review and for giving other people inspiration that they can also let go of all of those shoulds that weigh us down.

Okay, here's our next question. Lately, I've started eating healthier and exercising. However, the pounds continue to pack on and I'm at a loss. I feel better about my physical appearance, but I'm struggling with the number. I'm scared that I'm damaging my health. How do I work out my thoughts about this? I logically know the number is absolute bullshit and my body looks good to me on the mirror, but I'm still having a hard time putting the thoughts of inadequacy aside. If I'm doing everything quote-unquote right, then why is the number not reducing?

Okay, so there are a couple of things going on here that we have to disentangle, right? Number one, I have no idea what's happening with your scale, right? And this question, if I'm doing everything right, why is the number not going down? I'm obviously not a weight loss coach, so I don't

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know, but I also know that there's no such thing as doing everything right because everybody's body is different and any weight loss advice that has to do with intentional weight loss that's supposed to work the same for everyone is definitely not going to.

So, one thing I would say, today is the day of making sure you get your blood work done, right? It is possible that you have, I don't know, a thyroid imbalance or something else that is causing if you feel like you're having sudden weight loss that is not due to a change in eating or activity or something like that, then yeah, I would go get your hormones checked. There are certainly endocrine problems that can create weight gain that doesn't seem related to your normal body type or your activity or whatever. So get that checked.

But here's the other thing that's so fascinating about this. I think that this fear about health is just a displaced fear about weight, right? It's like, there are ways in which the modern body positivity movement or just even the modern, I think there's also socio-economic and class markers to this. In my world of the women that I know who know that body positivity exists or who are in certain kinds of social cultures, nobody really talks about dieting to try to get thinner. Right? Everybody just talks about their health. But the same behavior patterns and fear are there, right? We've just swapped in health for thinness. It's like gauche passé to talk about wanting to be thin, but being obsessed with your health, everybody validates and acts like is normal.

So, it's one thing to be like, "I love my body, I want to take care of it," and "I know I have this particular health thing and that this particular activity might help with it." That's totally different than this kind of free-floating chronic anxiety and agitation about ruining your health, right? Or damaging your health. Like this fear. When you are afraid, that is just the same old diet thinking with health on top of it because that fear is mostly coming from

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moralizing that there's something wrong with you if you damage your health.

And when people talk about being scared that they're damaging their health, they usually have no idea. They haven't gone to the doctor and gotten blood work. They haven't been told, oh, this cholesterol is high or your blood pressure is high or your blood sugar is high. They're usually not operating with any data. And in fact, then we're scared to go to the doctor because we don't want to hear the answers because we don't just see it as neutral data. We see it as meaning there's something wrong with us.

So, when you're in this spin about health, it's important to number one, understand that if you are feeling fear that makes you avoidant, right? Or makes you feel really afraid, it's not about your actual health. It's about your thoughts about it and usually it's because you're making it mean something bad about yourself. Same way you would have with thinness. Number two, you have to be onto your brain and not just buy it. Your brain is telling you, oh, you totally love your body, but you just have to be very afraid that you're damaging your health. But has your brain had you go to the doctor and find out if there is anything wrong with your health? No.

So, go to the doctor if you really are concerned about your health. Find out what your health actually is because right now this is all just a shell game in your brain. And especially if you like the way you look but then you're having this fear about mysterious health damage on the inside, it's not about anything concrete. It's just the same diet brain, diet mentality in a different dress.

And I'm not saying that you shouldn't take care of your health. In fact, I'm saying the opposite. I'm saying, yeah, go get your health checked out. See if there is anything to actually be concerned about. And if there is, you can address that, but if there's not, then you really know that this is not about your health at all. That's really what this is about. And I think you sort of

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know that because you say, "I'm having a hard time putting the thoughts of inadequacy aside." It's about inadequacy. It's not about your health.

If somebody has headaches, they're not like, oh, I'm inadequate because I have headaches. Well, some of you might be. I think that. But this weight and body stuff is really all about inadequacy. So you just have to call bullshit on your brain. It's not really about my health brain. I've gone and gotten my health checked, my health is fine. Or yeah, the doctor said I should meditate to bring down my blood pressure, whatever. And yes, I'm doing that. And it's very specific. This overall generalized fear about your health that makes you feel inadequate is not really about your health at all.

Alright, my dears. I will talk to you next week.