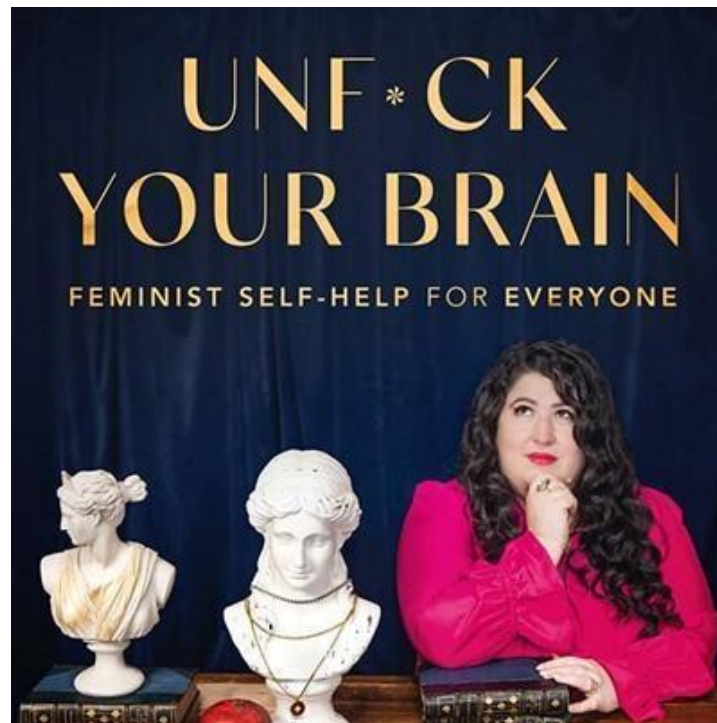


# UFYB 479: Coaching Hotline: How to Say No When You Fear Being Rude & When You Can't Change Your Thoughts Yet



## Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

**Kara Loewentheil**

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## **UFYB 479: Coaching Hotline: How to Say No When You Fear Being Rude & When You Can't Change Your Thoughts Yet**

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 coaching hotline, all one word. Let's get into this week's questions.

Alright. First question. "How do you address the deeply embedded, quote, 'politeness,' unquote, in being raised as a female, compounded when that politeness leads to unwanted encounters or attention, quote, 'harassment,' unquote," these are all quotes in the question, "or dangerous situations and then critically self-judge. I.e. politely accepting, thanking for daily gifts from an older man, which progressed in number and frequency of visits until finally saying, quote, 'I won't take your gifts, I'm not interested, I'm uncomfortable,' end quote. Paired with doubt, quote, 'Am I an asshole for turning these down or an asshole for not saying no sooner? What if he's just being nice? What if he spent a lot of time or thought on picking these out?' End quote. Etc."

Okay. So, I think it's a great question. There's sort of a couple, there's always a couple of different answers, aren't there? No. Sometimes I'm like, there's one answer, but most of the time there's a couple of different, because there's a couple of different strands in each question. So, how do we deal with the politeness issue, right, is we have to change our thoughts about what that even means and why it's important. Why are we supposed to be polite? And I think that politeness is kind of a cover for feeling entitled

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to just do what we want or don't want. You don't have to accept a gift from someone even if it's not harassment. Even if it's not dangerous. If you don't want the gift, you don't have to take it. It doesn't matter why the person's giving it to you or whether they're dangerous or not.

So, I think really what that, like, quote unquote politeness is about is prioritizing kind of social cohesion over your own preferences. And in a way, it's really just people-pleasing. It's like worrying more about how this other person might feel more than your own. And asking the wrong question, like asking yourself whether your response is justified versus whether just what you want or don't want. And that's where all of the doubt comes in, which is really the issue here. It's the self-doubt and the believing that I think women are raised to think like, okay, you're allowed to say no to things if they're dangerous, and so then we're constantly trying to parse if something's dangerous or not because we think otherwise we're not allowed to say no.

And as I'm talking about this, I also think that's one of the reasons that we end up with a lot of behaviors that probably aren't dangerous, we end up labeling as extreme or dangerous because it's like that's the only reason we would be allowed to just say no. But if you believe in your own autonomy and empowerment and that you're allowed to say no whenever you want, the way you've been taught it is not a characteristic or value that you want to have, then you don't have to have all of this doubt and discussion with yourself. You're just like, I don't want that. Please stop giving me gifts. I'm not interested in them. Then it's over.

It's all of the doubt that makes us feel so uncomfortable and like I think clouds our vision about what's truly a danger to us or not, because number one, we think we're only allowed to say no if it's dangerous, but also number two, all of our agitation about not trusting ourselves can be read, I think we sometimes read that as a sign of danger. Right? It's like we're

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agitated emotionally because we don't think we're allowed to just say no, and then we don't trust ourselves about whether or not it's dangerous, and then we create all this anxiety and then we think the person or the thing is causing the anxiety. And then we're like, oh, it's dangerous and weird and bad.

Whereas this dude can try to give you presents for whatever reason he wants. Like, he's a human being with autonomy. He has his own models. He's allowed to do that, and you're allowed to say no the first time and however many times you want to. And if you accept that empowerment, if you allow yourself to just say no when you don't want things, for whatever your reason is, right? As long as you like your reason. If you just allow yourself to say no, and you are not prioritizing how he might feel or like what society thinks, which is like usually what one of your parents would think secretly, right?

If you're not prioritizing those, then you can see so much more clearly. And then you can tell the difference between some old dude who's just giving you presents because who knows why and between someone who's actually potentially is a physical threat, between somebody who is trying to get something from you or who might be actually physically dangerous and most people who are not.

So, that's I think how we have to deal with that, right? I would stop thinking about it as politeness because we think because politeness sounds good. Right? Sounds nice. It really isn't nice what's happening here in your brain. It's really people-pleasing and it's really putting your own preferences last above the preferences of a total fucking stranger or just what you think other people might think about you. So, it's just people-pleasing in different ways. And you have to work on granting yourself the empowerment. You're the only person who ever can to just not, just say no when you don't want

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to do something, you don't want to accept something, you don't want to talk to someone, whatever it is, to just say no.

And once you believe that you are allowed and empowered to do that, then you won't have all of this doubt and back and forth because all of that is about like his intentions and it doesn't matter what his intentions are. It's like we don't have to evaluate all that. It doesn't matter. Who cares why he's doing it? You don't want it. You don't want to have these interactions. You don't want to accept these presents. That's all you need to know. And that really makes things so clear and then there's no, you don't have to go through all this doubt and discussion about what if he's nice. Maybe he is nice and spent a lot of time or thought on picking them out, and so what? It doesn't matter. You still don't have to accept it.

Someone could spend like two days preparing to talk to me and if I don't want to talk to them, I don't have to talk to them. We both get to make our own decisions. They got to make the decision to spend two days preparing to talk to me, knowing that I might or might not want to talk to them. And I get to decide that I don't want to talk to them. I don't owe them because they spent time on it. I don't owe them just because they're being nice. And vice versa, no one owes me just because I want to talk to them or I want to be friends with them or I want to give them a gift. I want to ingratiate myself with them. Like, they don't owe me anything. So, that's the answer. You got to empower yourself to make the choices you want to make.

So you got to work on those thoughts you have about why other people's preferences matter more or what other people might think about you or why anyone's entitled to your attention. Like, that's some deep thought work you got to do. When you do that, you won't have to worry about the doubt. So, what's really important to take away from this partly is don't try to work on the doubt before you've worked on that underlying issue. That's just going to get confusing. You have to really work on that, not underlying, but like,

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the doubt only comes in because of the thought that you're not allowed to just say no if you want to, whatever your reason is. So that's what you got to work on first, then you won't have doubt.

But if you don't work on those thoughts about why you need to be polite, then working on the doubt won't help because you're just sort of, it's like you'll have to keep doing it every time you make a decision, then you'll have to work on not doubting the decision, whereas if you just resolve the thoughts that have to do with the decision itself, then the doubt won't happen. It's not that they're deeper, it's just like sequential. One happens before the other. So if we resolve the second step of the sequence, then we'll have to keep doing that because the first step's going to keep happening. But if we resolve the first step of the sequence, then the second step just won't even come up.

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.

This week's review comes from Mickey Meta Muse. She says, "Thanks from a fellow coach. Hi, Kara. I'm really enjoying hearing your expertise and wisdom on coaching and business building, especially as I am a certified life coach my first year of business. I really enjoyed the most

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recent Q&A episode about what thoughts did you think the first three years of your business? Especially hearing that it's a natural thing to operate at a loss for any new business for at least the first year. That's healing and also validating at the same time. I'm really taking notes on everything you're doing and appreciate your work."

Okay, next question. "I'm working with a 48-year-old scarcity mindset and this is one stubborn worldview. I've done the manifestation meditations. Been there, done that. I've tried to see money as math, not drama or emotion. But, and you knew there was a butt coming, but my money thoughts based in lack feel paralyzing. I feel afraid. I worry, I catastrophize. I freak myself the hell out going from 0 to 100 in record time. Some days are better, some months are better, but I see that I haven't dealt with my underlying thoughts. I do not control my thinking in this area properly. Help me unfuck my brain of money fear for my own piece of mind and so that I can grow my income. I'd rather focus on my feminist badass self instead of my underlying money hoarder tendencies, which lead to debt and more lack, rule my mind. Help."

So, here's the thing and here's why I wanted to kind of answer this question. Because there isn't really a question here. Which is totally fine. No one teaches you how to write a question into a coach. I mean, there is a question. That's not the right way to say it is. What I really mean is there's no answer to this or any other question other than doing the thought work on the specific thoughts. So sometimes when you guys submit a question, it's a question that's like, I want to feel better about X, or I have negative thoughts about Y. Yeah, of course. Welcome to the human brain. That's why we have coaching.

And I think sometimes it's natural for all of us to want the easy fix or to believe that if we haven't been able to change something yet, it's because we're missing a piece of information. We always just want to believe if we

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just knew one more thing, then it would be easy, right? Or if somebody just explained some part to us that we don't get, then it would all make sense. But I think that this question answerer does understand it intellectually. Right? She sees what her thoughts are doing. So there's no information that she's lacking. Whoever it is who wrote this question, you don't need another piece of information or another tool. You have the tools you need. The only problem here is you, really this question is like, well, I've tried and it hasn't worked yet.

And I'm like, yeah, me too, honey. Right? Like, there's lots of things that I have to work on for months or sometimes even years to change them. So, you see what your brain's doing, that you catastrophize. You see you're not controlling your thinking. And the way that we change that is by doing thought downloads and doing models and working on changing our thoughts with ladders and with believing harder and with whatever we want to call it, mantras and positive thoughts. Like, this is how we do it, is we change our thoughts, thought by thought.

So, obviously there are always more tools to learn, but it is important to understand, and the reason I want to answer this question, when you see the problem, you see what your thoughts are doing, and you just currently still believe your thoughts. Like, there's a difference between I believe all my thoughts and I don't know their thoughts, and I can't even figure out how to see that their thoughts. That's one problem where a tool might help, like learning something new or you need to be coached to even see that their thoughts. With this, I just want you all to know that this is a normal part of the process where you see that your thoughts are thoughts, and some days are okay and some days are not so good in the sense of you believe this thoughts more and you have them more, and you feel afraid and worried, and you think that means something's gone wrong.

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This is just the human experience and this is where your brain is right now. And the only solution to it is, well, number one, stop believing it's a problem. But number two, you just have to keep practicing. So it's just important to understand that just because you intellectually understand, you can see that you have thoughts and you still believe them, that doesn't mean something's gone wrong. That's actually a phase in thought work. You, right? We could say the first phase is you believe all your thoughts and you don't know their thoughts. You think they're true. And then phase two is you know their thoughts, but you still believe them. And that is what we call the struggle bus or the river of misery. I call it the struggle bus.

It's just, meditation teachers have a different name. It's just a phase of human consciousness where we see that we are believing thoughts and that we're causing our own suffering, but we still believe the thoughts. This is a normal phase. It does not mean something has gone wrong. In fact, this is a large phase. It's a long phase. The first phase where you don't know their thoughts, I can teach you their thoughts pretty quickly, and that's where I can intervene more effectively, I think. I can coach you on specific thoughts, right? Like, if you have a specific thought you give me, I can help coach you on it.

But no one can take away the part where you see the thoughts are thoughts, but you still believe them, and that's uncomfortable. That is just a phase of thought work, of with any problem, that's one of the phases of awareness and change. And then once you finally get off the struggle bus, which like, sometimes it takes 10 minutes and sometimes it might take a year or more, anywhere in between there. Once you get off the struggle bus, then that third phase is you see and know it's a thought and you can change it. Right? You no longer believe it.

So, that was really why I wanted to answer this question. But even though I can't coach you on the specific thoughts from this question because they're

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not in here, I did want to talk about this question because understanding that this is a normal phase of thought work that can last a while is important. I think like, there's exponential life-changing power between not even knowing your thoughts are thoughts and then knowing that they're thoughts and that they're optional, even if you still believe them. That's what, like, meditation mostly takes place in that area, right? It's awareness of the thoughts without conscious intervention to change them. And that is life-changing.

The difference between I see their thoughts, I still believe them, and oh, now I can change them, I think it creates a bigger-looking difference on the outside because your actions change, but on the inside, to me, the through the looking glass moment happens, it's in stage two. It's I now know that these are optional thoughts that aren't true. I can see them operating, even though I'm still believing them and acting on them, I'm aware. I can never lose that awareness. I can't go back through the looking glass. I can't forget that I've learned this. That to me is when you pass through to the other side. And then the rest of it is like, yeah, okay, it's fun to change it, create new things in your life. All that is great.

So, I'm saying all of that because I don't want you guys to undervalue, like so many of you resist the struggle bus and you resist being in this part of it, like you think this is like a waste of time or that it's not useful or that you just want to rush through it to feel better. But so much of your distress is caused by the resistance. And if you embrace this stage as a such a powerful learning experience, you're going to have such a different experience of it.