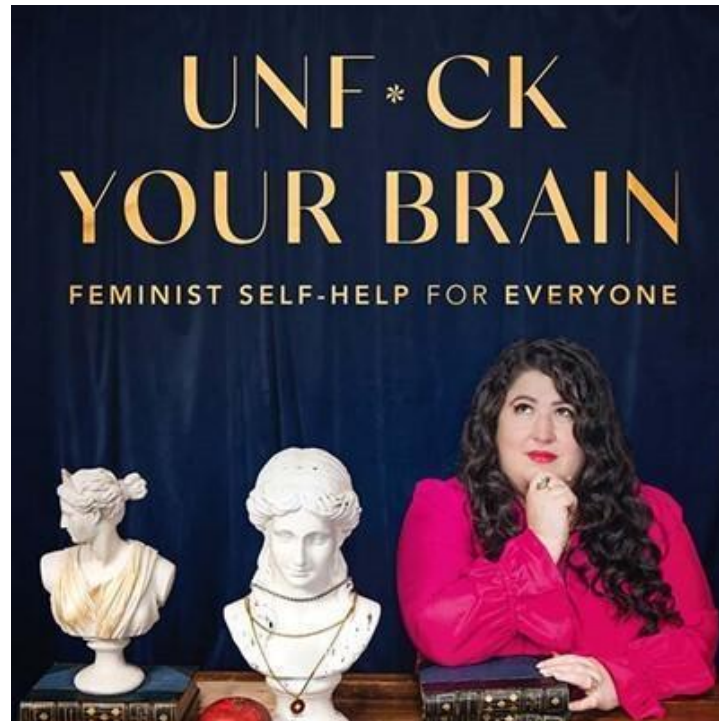


UFYB 485: Coaching Hotline: Managing Anxiety for Loved Ones & Staying Motivated During a Job Search



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

Here's our first question. "Many of the podcasts and QAs are about relationships with adults. But how do you manage anxiety about someone you are responsible for? I have a disabled five year old son. Despite years of professional therapy, I still struggle majorly with managing my fearful thoughts about the long term effects of my child's disability. Like any parent, I'm sad to see my child struggle or get hurt.

"But more than that, my thoughts go catastrophic and I find myself having panic attacks when thinking about bullies, unsupportive and or incompetent teachers, relatives in denial, the general stress of being disabled, and the fact that his disability is highly correlated with depression, anxiety, shorter lifespan, and high rates of suicide. My survival lizard brain is basically always flashing red that he is in danger. I can't separate facts from my fears. What is responsible parenting from helicopter parenting? I also have simultaneous guilt because parental anxiety is also super harmful to the kids."

Okay. So it was a great question, and I wanna kind of approach it from a couple of different angles. So I'm just gonna kinda give you some things to think about here. The first one is that I think embedded implicit in this

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question is your belief that it's your child's disability that is why you have all these thoughts. That if you had a five year old son who was not disabled, your brain would not have these thoughts.

And I don't think that's true. I've coached plenty of people with children who are not living with any kind of disability who have all of these same thoughts. And the reason that's important is that you're basically blaming as we all do your thoughts on the circumstance. And so you're like, yeah. Okay.

These other questions aren't relevant for me. And even the other parenting coaching I see isn't relevant because my c is different, which is that my child is disabled. But the C never causes the thoughts and feelings. And here, you believe that because your child is disabled, you are more responsible for him than anyone else would be responsible for a five year old. That's an optional thought.

Everybody who has a five year old is responsible for them if they choose to believe that. Now some people don't think they're responsible for their children at all, but I don't think I've ever coached anybody with a five year old to say like, you treat them like you would an adult. They're a five year old. You kind of are if you choose to be. I mean, responsible is a funny word because you choose that.

Some people don't take responsibility for keeping their children alive. But if you decide to do that, you do have to do more to keep a five year old alive than to keep another adult alive because five year olds can't go to the store and buy food for themselves. Right? So one thing to be distinguishing here is looking at your belief that the C that your child is disabled is what's causing all of this when it really isn't. And a lot of this, really all of it, are thoughts that people have about their children whether their children are disabled or not.

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It's important to understand that because so long as you believe your brain that like it's different because your child is disabled, you're always gonna feel this way because you're telling yourself that all of the learning and coaching that you could get from other people's parenting coaching or from coaching yourself isn't available to you because your circumstance is different. Almost everything you write here, bullies, people who are not disabled experienced bullies. Unsupportive or incompetent teachers, people who are not disabled experienced that. Relatives in denial, depending on what the thing is, experience that. Right?

People who are of a different sizes or different sexual orientations or whatever else experience relatives who aren't sympathetic to or don't understand their life. Right? The general stress of being disabled. Again, people with a lot of different, quote, unquote, conditions or people of color experience more stress. People women experience more stress.

And, you know, said depression, anxiety, high rates of suicide. Again, these are things that are sometimes correlated with other identity groups or experiences or just are genetic because they run-in families. So you have to kind of separate what's going on is you're taking like all the thoughts that parents have about their children in general and all of the kind of anxiety and fear your brain is creating. And I think that you're just believing that it's all true, that it's about the C that it's because he's disabled. But the C never causes the thoughts.

And this thought, someone you're responsible for, you really get to decide what that means. You have chosen to be responsible for taking care of him, at least while he's a child. But you're not responsible nor can you control all of the rest of this stuff. And then you set up this impossible catch 22 for yourself where you tell yourself that parental anxiety is harmful to kids. So you're telling yourself I have to be anxious to protect him, and when I'm anxious, that harms him, which should just be kind of an indication to you that your brain is not reliable about this.

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So here's what I want you to consider that I don't think you're gonna like, but I think is gonna be the key to unlocking this for you. What do you imagine a parent who is the parent of a non disabled child would be allowed to think about all these things that you aren't allowed to think because he's disabled? That's what I want you to think. I think in your mind, you probably think if he weren't disabled, I wouldn't worry about any of this or be easier because of x y z, I would be able to believe x y z. That's what I want you to imagine.

Those thoughts are available to you now. And it's your belief that because he's disabled you know, I'm just interpreting from this question. But I think that you believe that if he weren't disabled, you'd have a whole different set of thoughts. And I think that those are the thoughts you need to get down on paper and look at and ask yourself to consider how it might be possible that you could believe those things now. You for sure think his disability is a problem and makes his life worse, and that's also something you can consider because that's what's so ironic about this.

Like, the thing you want is for the disability to not make your child's life worse. You're the one believing that it's making his life worse. And so long as you believe that, that's all you're gonna see. So those are the two things that I would work on.

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, 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

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one story from a recent review in each of these question and answer episodes.

Today's review comes from CupiCak3, but it's spelled with a three, who says more understanding and more happiness. "Fantastic podcast. Wish I had this when I was in medical school or residency or early career, or I guess now is a great time to get wise." And I love that because it is actually really common for people to learn how to think differently and then start immediately regretting that they didn't know it before. But listen, you might not have been ready for it before. Now when you're able to hear it is always the perfect time to start managing your mind.

Okay. Next question. "I'm moving to a new city to continue my education. I have some money saved up for my first three months, but I know I need to find a job as soon as possible in order to comfortably live in the city for the foreseeable future. What are some thoughts I can think to help motivate me through the job seeking process? I have a hard time knowing if I'm quote unquote trying hard enough to get the job I want, but I also know that if it doesn't happen, I can waitress. I'm stuck between the comfort of knowing I have a backup and not knowing what job I could have if I really tried hard, quote unquote, and didn't consider my backup as the real option I'm probably going to pursue."

Okay. So I love this question because it's the wrong question. But of course, we are always asking the wrong questions, all of us. What are some thoughts I can think to help motivate me? It's like you've already decided you wanna create motivation, but you don't even know why. I think you're stuck on, I have a hard time knowing if I'm trying hard enough.

It's like, it's just you're trying to evaluate yourself and criticize yourself. So you're like, I'm not sure if I'm quote unquote trying hard enough. So to make sure I try hard enough so that I'm like not being a bad person or not being lazy, I need to motivate myself. So what are some thoughts I can

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think to motivate myself so that I will know that I tried hard enough so that I won't have to feel bad about not trying hard enough? It's like you don't really have any positive motivation here.

So of course, you are already thinking you'll just do the backup option. So the question isn't what are some thoughts you can think to motivate you? Because it doesn't sound to me like you even know whether you wanna be motivated. You gotta decide like if you just want a waitress, just waitress. If you actually want to do something else, not just to not feel bad about yourself, because you have some desire to actually do something else, then the question is, what would I need to do to get that kind of job and what's my compelling reason?

I don't think you have a compelling reason here. Just being able to tell yourself that you quote unquote tried hard enough is not a compelling reason because it's all just kind of shame avoidance based. You're just like trying to not feel bad about yourself if you don't try hard enough. So the question isn't what are some thoughts you can think to motivate you. You gotta figure out, do you actually want this other kind of job?

What is this other kind of job and why do you want it? Do you have any compelling reason? And if you don't, don't try to motivate yourself, find something you actually care enough about doing to do the mental work to do. It's not like if you find something you care about, there won't be self coaching you'll have to do. You'll for sure still have to coach yourself.

But this, you're just sort of I think trying to try hard enough quote unquote, you don't have to feel bad about yourself. That's not gonna ever be compelling and I can't give you thoughts to think that will motivate you through that because you're you're not coming from any affirmative desire to do something or interest or excitement about it from what I can tell on this question. And so I think that's why you're all turned around.

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So you gotta figure out if you have a reason that isn't just self criticism and shame based for actually trying to get a different kind of job. And if not, then just get a waitress job and skip the internal discussion about it. Save yourself some time. Alright, my dears. That's it for this week. I'll talk to you next week.