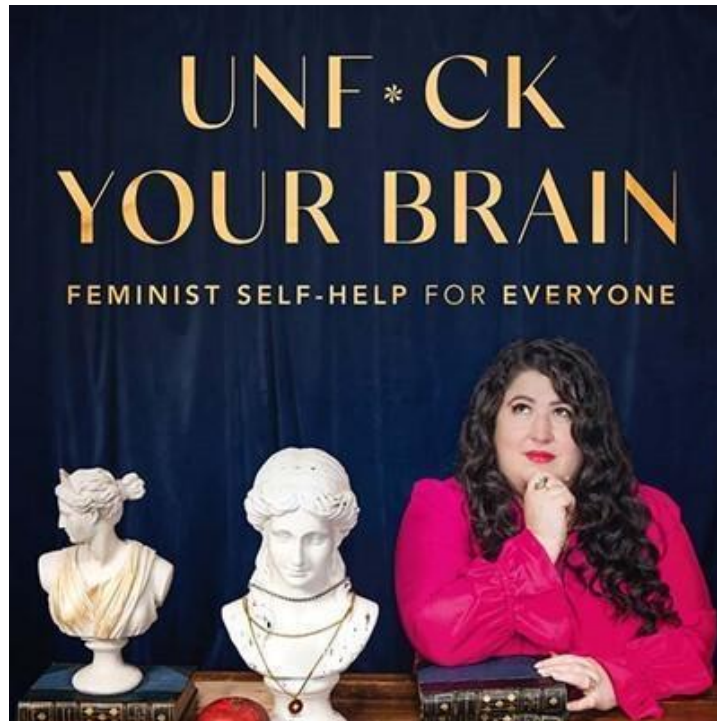


UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work

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 is the first question, which I think is a great one because I think a lot of you struggle with this, or I don't even love the word struggle, but deal with this. So, here's the question. She says, "In addition to my full-time job, I have an illustration business. I'm not massive actioning it for now because I'm focused on school, but I want to keep it going as much as I can. Part of the business is posting my work on social media as a way to get free marketing. When I do though, I can't seem to stop myself from checking how many likes I get on a post or thinking about how many likes or comments it has. I suspect it's because of the thought I should have more likes/engagement, but there may be something else lurking. My result is I'm not focusing on creating more art, products, and services.

"What's the Kara hot take on all this? Do you use particular thoughts that lead to commitment to create content without worrying about the relative popularity of your work? I'm struggling to find the service that I can provide to people if I'm primarily creating art related to my interests. People have asked me to create art of loved ones, which I've done."

Okay. So, there's a couple things going on in this question, and the first one is that I want to show you all that this is not all one question. This is at

UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work

least two questions, possibly three. So, one question is why you keep checking your posts. And it's possible that it's because you believe you should have more likes or engagement, but I think that this question is not taking into account the way in which phones and social media are designed to stimulate our desire for dopamine by sort of dripping out little bits of validation, the likes or the hearts, or the algorithms. They don't always show you comments the minute the comments are made. They drip them out to keep you engaged.

So, the reason that you keep checking is that you just want dopamine. Just want you to think of yourself as a squirrel who just wants a nut. This is my metaphor this week. So, I want to caution you guys to not always try to find the deep, deep thought because yes, this question asker and listener has some thoughts about her business, which I'm going to talk about in a minute, but that doesn't mean that anything going on with Instagram is about that thought. I think that you're checking because you want the dopamine hit of seeing people liked your post so that you can think people like my stuff, right? Or whatever it is.

So, I'm not sure that it's from I should have more likes/engagement. I don't think that would keep you checking. I should have more is a negative thought. I don't think if you think you should have more, why would you then check your likes, right? I think you think I'll feel good if I see there's likes, so I'm going to check it, right? It's a positive association in your brain that you're going to get some dopamine from it. So that's what I think is going on there.

And then you've got this sort of tied into creating content without worrying about the relative popularity of your work, which is a whole other question, and I don't really think it has that much to do with checking the likes on Instagram. So, I think your problem here is your thought that if you're primarily creating art related to your interests, that's not a service that you

UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work

provide to people. That's your assumption here. If I'm primarily creating art related to my interests, that is not a service to other people.

That is the thought I think you need to question. How do you know that's true? I mean, it's not a service in the same way of saying, "I will make a portrait of your dog for \$30," or whatever that would be. But so what? I think that first of all, you have to decide what kind of business you want, right? You say you have an illustration business, but what does that mean? Do you want to illustrate other people's work, or do you want to draw what you want to draw and you want to try to figure out how to get paid for it? Those are really two different business models.

So, you need to decide, am I trying to make a living as a full-time illustrator? And if so, what are the models for that? And do I want to have a service-based business, meaning people, I have clients and customers who I make stuff for? Or do I want to make the kind of art I want to make and I'm going to try to figure out how to sell it or have a Patreon account or get a book deal, whatever you're going to do to try to make money from making the art that you want to make.

So, I don't really think it's about worrying about relative popularity. It's like in your brain these things are all mixed up. If it's popular, then I'll make more money from it, but I don't know if I'm providing a service or not. These things all need to be disentangled. What kind of business are you trying to have? What's your business model? Right? You need a clear business model. And that will really clarify a lot of this, I think, about what you're using this account for, how you plan to make money off of it, and then what you need to do to do that. And there's not a right or wrong. Your business model could be clients give me commissions and I illustrate what they want and I make money, in which case maybe you want your Instagram account to feature various client illustrations so people can see what they would get.

UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work

Or maybe your business model is I make amazing illustrations that speak to the art that I want to create and I believe other people are going to want to somehow pay to support me in doing that. I'm going to get a book contract by getting enough followers or I'm going to have a Patreon account or I'm going to whatever. I'm not an expert in the different forms of illustration businesses, but you need to clarify for yourself what your business model is. Don't tell yourself that it's a struggle to find a service you can provide if you're creating art for your own interests. That's not a helpful thought. You need to decide what business model you want and then go from there.

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.

Today, I have a review that made me cry. This review is from Gianna Nuñez, and the title is "Life-Changing." She says, "I've been listening to this podcast since 2019. At that point in my life, I only had a high school diploma and was working a series of dead-end food service jobs. I had always been great in school growing up, but I had crippling anxiety, depression, and confidence issues that led to me dropping out of college and losing my spark. Kara's teachings were honestly the catalyst that helped me change my life.

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

UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work

“As of today, I have a master's degree and work in a mission-oriented nonprofit, which I absolutely adore. I am married to the love of my life. I am creating art and painting more than I ever have. I am no longer scared to death of failure, and instead, I embrace every step in the journey of life, including all of the difficult and uncomfortable moments. I finally feel like I am truly living instead of just being in constant survival mode. I'm no longer hard on myself and ruminate on the past much less than I used to. I feel like a different person, the person I was always supposed to be.

“Thank you, Kara. Although I do not know you, you have been a constant companion to me and have changed me in ways I never could have expected. I love myself, I love life, and I even love my mistakes and failures. I am so excited to continue to blow my own mind.” Y'all, just sobbing the first time I read that. This is why I do the work that I do.

Okay, second question. "Hi, Kara. I love the work of Brené Brown, which is all about vulnerability. She talks about being vulnerable as about being brave enough to be real with others, to show other people our true selves. We often shy away from it because we think it makes us weak or at risk of being hurt, but her research shows being willing to be vulnerable actually makes us stronger. In the thought work sense, I think this fits with taking responsibility for our own emotional health. But according to this framework, others don't hurt us emotionally. We hurt ourselves with our thoughts about their actions or words. So does the concept of emotional vulnerability as Brené Brown teaches it really fit with thought work? Deep topic. Would love your insights. Thanks so much."

I think that Brené Brown is right except that all of our thoughts about other people are just our own thoughts about ourselves. So, I do think it's vulnerability with ourselves. We only worry about other people's judgment when we are having that same judgment with ourselves. So, I think being vulnerable is being willing to be vulnerable with yourself, like willing to be honest with yourself about who you are, willing to hold space for yourself

UFYB 489: Coaching Hotline: Social Media Validation & Emotional Vulnerability vs. Thought Work

without judgment, willing to tell the truth about who you are. And I think some of what Brené Brown calls vulnerability with other people, I would call authenticity.

I think showing up and being who you are to other people is being authentic, not necessarily vulnerable because my experience is that in order to show up the way I am, I have to accept myself. And when I've done that, I no longer feel vulnerable to other people. I kind of think what Brené Brown is teaching is be brave enough to show up as your scared self that other people might reject. But my experience is that's just a stressful way to do it and other people can't really reject you. It's your own thoughts.

So, I think that other people are just the green screen we're projecting our own thoughts about ourselves onto them. And so, all of this is really about our relationship with ourselves. There's a reason that Brené Brown is not a life coach. And I think that a lot of academic studies are done on people who don't know about thought work. So, it's like they only go so far. I for sure believe that people who are willing to show up authentically and take risks even when they're scared to share themselves with other people are stronger, whatever that means. Whatever however she's defining her outcomes, probably have more emotional resilience than people who aren't willing to do that, if we're just in the universe of people who don't know thought work.

But I think for sure people who know thought work are more emotionally resilient and more able to show up authentically than either of the other two categories of people who don't know thought work, and that it isn't really about vulnerability. So, bottom line, I think you can either think about it as it's vulnerability with yourself or you can think of it as really being about authenticity, which is what I really think it turns into when we're talking about how we show up as ourselves in the world and in our interactions with other people.