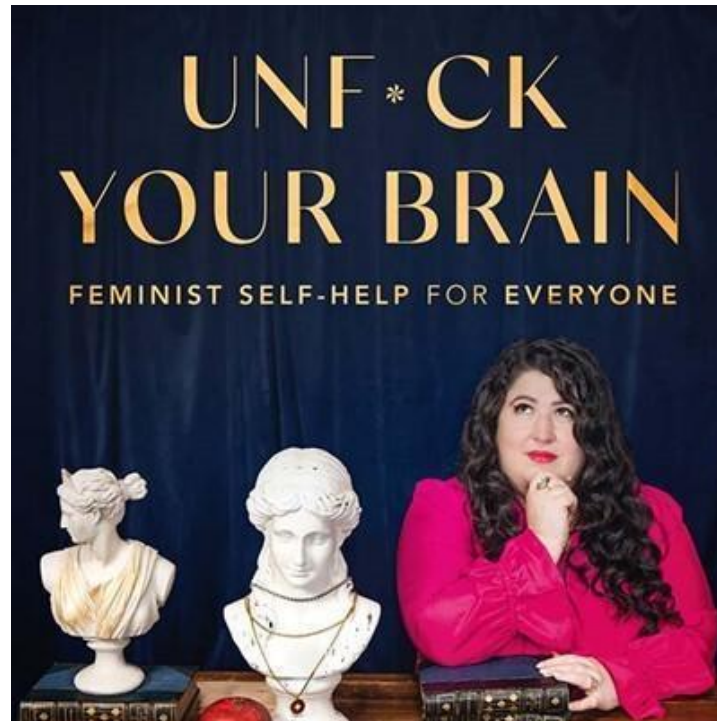


UFYB 497: Coaching Hotline: Managing Your Mind During PMS & Is Disappointment a Cop-Out?



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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

UFYB 497: Coaching Hotline: Managing Your Mind During PMS & Is Disappointment a Cop-Out?

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.

First question, I think a lot of you probably have, and it's about PMS. "Hi Kara, I wanted to know your thoughts about PMS. I understand that most of the stigmas around PMS come from the patriarchy, but I do find it harder to manage my mind during my time of the month. I am usually more irritable, overly sensitive, short-tempered, and overall less emotionally resilient. Even when I know I'm about to start my period and try to bring awareness to my overload of emotions during that time, I still find it harder to manage my mind. Do you have any advice on how to think about this? I'm confused about whether this is normal or if it's all in my head."

All right, so I think this is a great question, and I think this question applies to more than PMS because really what it applies to is any time that we think that some other biological system in our body might be impacting how we think and feel or our emotions or our emotional resilience. So, it might be PMS, it might be menopause, it might be depression, it might be anything else, right? And those aren't obviously all the same thing, but just other hormonal systems or some people find that they're more irritable when they're hungry, right? Like their blood sugar changing has an impact on how they feel.

UFYB 497: Coaching Hotline: Managing Your Mind During PMS & Is Disappointment a Cop-Out?

So here's what I think about this. I think that ultimately, it's hard for us to know if we don't have some kind of actual diagnosis, what is actually biological in some way or hormonal or blood sugar related or a chemical imbalance or whatever. It's hard for us to know exactly what it is. Often, medicine doesn't know exactly what it is either. They diagnose on symptoms. They don't know actually what's happening in the body all the time. We often don't know, but I don't think that it matters in the sense that a lot of the tools just still apply.

So, maybe you are more irritable, overly sensitive, short-tempered, and less emotionally resilient. Like that's your thought about that time of month. But even if there is some hormonal thing happening in your body that's different, how do you feel when you think, "I'm more irritable, overly sensitive, short-tempered, and less emotionally resilient"? When you have that thought about PMS, you're just for sure creating more of that. You actually have no idea how different your hormone levels are. Maybe it's a huge swing. Maybe it's a tiny swing. Maybe it has a big difference on your emotional resilience. Maybe it has very little difference. Like we really don't know.

And so you just want to be careful that you're not conflating, yes, the conceptual idea that some biological systems in our bodies might impact how easy it is for us to regulate ourselves emotionally or what physical sensations we have that we might be confusing with emotions or vice versa, and the story you have about it. I always remember one of my very first coaching clients believed that she was going through early menopause. She was having hot flashes and they would come out of nowhere, and she really believed she had this hormonal dysregulation. She'd been to doctors, they weren't able to help her.

And I actually, as a beginning coach, kind of bought her story, and I was like, "Okay, that's interesting. Let's at least see what's going on when you have them and how you're thinking about them." And what we discovered

UFYB 497: Coaching Hotline: Managing Your Mind During PMS & Is Disappointment a Cop-Out?

was that she had them when she was angry. She was actually feeling anger, but she was so divorced from her own emotions and so not in tune with feeling them that she interpreted them to be like hormonal hot flashes. And then she had this whole story about her hormones.

So I just really like to caution. I'm not saying that there's no such thing as hormonal changes in the body that might impact your emotions, but that's a far cry from that to, "I know exactly what I'm like during my cycle, and here's all these adjectives that I tell myself I am that of course just produce more and more of that."

So that's the first answer. The second thing I would say is, okay, let's just say everything you said is true and let's put it in the circumstance line. Like, let's pretend it could be a true circumstance that you are more irritable, more sensitive, more short-tempered, and less emotionally resilient. Like, let's pretend that's a circumstance. You still get to decide what to think about that. Let's just pretend it is a circumstance that it's harder to manage your mind when there are certain different levels of hormones in your body. Okay, you're a human and you're going to have those levels of hormones for a while. What do you want to think about it?

Even just doing that takes the drama down quite a bit, rather than sort of being confused about it. It's like the answer, there's nothing to be confused about because the answer is always pay attention to my thoughts and feelings and be kind to myself about them. That's just always the answer. There's never a time that's not the answer. Even if a doctor could tell you all this was true, do you want to keep constantly thinking that thought? How does that serve you? So what if you are those things during PMS? How do you want to think and feel about it?

If you could know that was a physical condition that you were these things, then you would just think, "Oh, well, this is a physical condition, so it's okay and I don't have to be mean to myself about it," basically. And you can just

UFYB 497: Coaching Hotline: Managing Your Mind During PMS & Is Disappointment a Cop-Out?

think that now. So there's really no reason to be confused because the answer is always practice awareness and compassion for yourself. And I just think that's always what we want to be doing and that we really generally don't know where on the spectrum the hormonal or the biological or the sensation and the emotion may bleed into each other, and it really doesn't matter that much because if there's a medication to take for something, then you take the medication, and if not, you manage your mind. And usually, even if you do take a medication, you have to manage your mind anyway.

I think it matters less than we think it does what the truth about this is because nobody knows. And so what are we going to do? We're going to pay attention to our minds, we're going to practice changing our thoughts, and we're going to be kind to ourselves when we can't. We're not going to be mean to ourselves about it, and we're not just going to give up because, well, it's 8 days of my cycle every month. I've just decided I am irritable and can't manage my mind, and there's no point in trying. We know for sure what result we'll get if that's the thought we choose, right? So, that's my answer to that.

All right, next question. This is kind of the confusion theme one. Somebody asked, "Is disappointment like confusion? For example, a friend gets sick and has to cancel a trip with me. I feel disappointed because I have the thought, 'I was looking forward to spending time with her.' It feels clean. I'm not assigning it a whole boatload of meaning, but maybe I'm disappointed as a cop-out like I'm confused."

So I don't think it's a cop-out. I don't know why it would be a cop-out. I think you're disappointed. It's a feeling. It's probably sadness, right? But we can call it disappointment. That's fine. You probably are thinking, "I'm disappointed" also because you have the thought, "I was looking forward to spending time with her." So no, I don't think it's a cop-out and I don't know why it would be. I think it's like this is how self-critical we are sometimes

UFYB 497: Coaching Hotline: Managing Your Mind During PMS & Is Disappointment a Cop-Out?

where we're like, "Oh, I'm processing an emotion. It feels clean. I'm fine with it. I must be doing something wrong." No, I think it sounds like you're doing it right, right? And nothing has gone wrong here.

I don't think it's a cop-out. I just think you feel a little sad. You're like, I mean, you're basically telling yourself, "I was going to feel good and now I'm not," or "I'm missing out on something." So of course you feel a little sad. And that's fine. You might decide to feel sad. It feels clean and you want to, or decide not to. It's up to you. But I don't think it's a cop-out.

Confusion is a cop-out because it just keeps you spinning, right? It's like you can never make any progress, whereas feeling a clean emotion, like feeling clean grief or sad, I mean, grief is a strong word for this. Like feeling sadness, you're not like, "Well, I'm going to just stay here forever." I'm going to feel that right now about this trip and that's fine, and then eventually, I'm going to move on. So it doesn't have the same kind of result as confusion, which just keeps you spinning and then you can't ever get any traction.

So, that's the my final ruling is that disappointment is not a cop-out and it's not like confusion. It's just a version of, it's just sadness probably, and it's caused by your thoughts. And it can be like anything else, kind of on the clean side or on the not-clean side depending on what the thoughts are producing it. So that's it for this week. I'll talk to you next week.