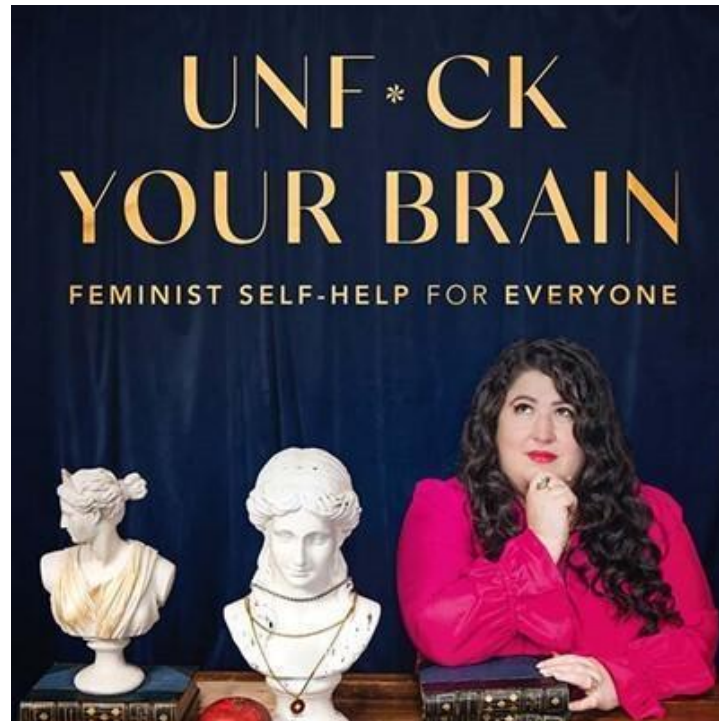


UFYB 499: Coaching Hotline: Explaining Divorce to Your Kids & When People-Pleasing Kills Real Connection



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.

First question is short and sweet. And in some ways, actually not a coaching question, but I have a coaching answer to it. So here's the question, "I'm entering the first stage of a divorce. We just talked about it, and I'm pursuing whatever comes next. I am concerned, how do I start to explain this to my 6-year-old and 3-year-old?"

So, here's my answer. I have no idea how you should explain it to your 6-year-old and 3-year-old because I have no idea what actions any of you should take because that's not my job as a coach. Now, I'm not saying that to mean you shouldn't ask this question. I think it's a great question. The reason I wanted to feature this question is that it's a perfect example of how when you ask a question that comes from your action line, your A line in your model, right? What should I do? How should I do this thing? It means that you are not believing in your own ability to figure out how you want to act, and it means that you're looking at the wrong line of the model.

Any action we take has to come from the thought and the feeling. The question is never, what should I do? Which is really what this question is, right? It's phrased as, how do I start to explain this? But really, it's like, how do I take the action in the right way or in the best way, or in the way that will

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make my children think and feel a certain thing. And that's always paralyzing because it's not taking into account what really matters, which is the thought and the feeling line.

So anytime you're asking yourself, what should I do or how should I do this, you're asking yourself the wrong question. The question is always, what are my thoughts about this? How do I want to think and feel?

When you get that aligned, your action becomes clear, whether it's to talk to your children in a certain way, whether it's to buy a book about how to talk to your children about divorce, whether it's to like consult a therapist, whether it's to like consult your priest or rabbi, like whatever it would be, your action that only you can know will come from your thought and feeling line being aligned, from you deciding on purpose how you want to feel about talking to your children about the divorce and what you want to believe and think about it. That's how you'll know if, whether, when, and how to explain it to your children.

When you start with that action line, how should I do this thing, how should I explain it, you completely block your own ability to come up with answers, which is why you end up asking someone else, like asking me, right? And I have no idea because I'm not in your life, right? I'm not in your model. My job as a coach isn't to know what action you should take and how. It's to show you your own mind and teach you how to think on purpose because that is what will determine everything else in your life.

So anytime you find yourself asking, how do I do this or what should I do or how do I make this thing happen, right? Anytime you're up in the action line, you're in the wrong place in the model to start. You have to start with the thought and the feeling. Now, I mean, sometimes we know we want to take X action, like, I know I want to make a hundred grand, or I know I want to go to medical school, or I know I want to, whatever. Yeah, then you can work backward to get the thought and feeling. But in that case, you're not

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confused about the A line. You know what the action is, you just want to work backwards.

But whenever you are indulging in confusion around the A line, right, telling yourself that you don't know what action to take or how to take the action, that's when you're asking yourself the wrong question. You have to back up. You just have to start with, what do I want to think? How do I want to feel? Right? And this is true at every journey. You've got thoughts about like that there's a right way to do it, that there's a wrong way to do it, like how it's going to impact them, that you're worried about doing it, right? You've got a lot of thoughts to clean up.

When you clean all that up, that's when the action is going to be clear to you. And that's always the case. Whenever the A line is muddy, you got to back it up. You have to start with how you want to feel and what do you need to think to feel that way. When you get that sorted out, the action line becomes clear on its own. So that's for all of you.

Next question. "Through coaching, I'm noticing that I seek external validation or engage in people-pleasing. I'm getting better at identifying it and either watching it happen or catching myself beforehand. What I don't have is a good replacement strategy. How do I transition out of putting others' needs before my own without reducing my social support or feelings of connectedness? Put another way, I show my love to others by putting their needs first. I'm getting better at showing love for myself by putting my needs first, but also value my genuine relationships with others and feel as though I'm not there for them."

This question, how do I transition out of putting others' needs before my own without reducing my social support or feelings of connectedness? What causes your feelings are your thoughts. Let me say it again. I know it's groundbreaking. Every time I realize it, it's groundbreaking again for me. What causes your feeling is your thoughts. Getting external validation or

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people-pleasing is not what causes a feeling of connectedness. That causes a feeling of validation and like ego affirmation. That's not connectedness.

Let's just call connectedness love. That's really what we're talking about, I think. And connectedness just sounds like a weird name for an emotion. But I think actually part of what's going on is calling it connectedness allows you to blur this. These are two different things. Feeling validated is when we think someone else approves of us. That's not the same as feeling love and connection. Those are two totally different things.

Putting other people's needs before your own, which is just a thought, but seeking external validation, doing things you don't want to do because other people want you to, that is not what causes a feeling of connection for you or love. What causes a feeling of connection or love for you is your own thoughts. And I think you probably don't know the difference in terms of how it feels. I think you've conflated them. And so I think the first thing that I would do is start to pay really close attention to what you're calling different feelings that you're having. The feeling you get when someone approves of you or when you get to think, oh, they're happy I did that for them, even though I didn't want to. Whatever feeling that is, that is not love and connection. That's validation or people-pleasing.

Love and connection are feelings that are created by our thoughts about loving other people and being connected to them. You have this assumption that you show your love to others by putting their needs first. That's not true because there's no such thing. Your love for others that you feel in your body is caused by your thoughts. It's not caused by putting their needs first, which is very vague. It's caused by your thoughts. Now, it's possible that you have the thought, I'm putting their needs first. That's how I show I love them. And then you feel love. But that's just from that thought. It's not from actually doing the thing.

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And you can't show love to others in the sense of making other people feel your love. So if you do something you don't want to do because someone else wants you to, that doesn't make them feel love for you. Their own thoughts are what will create love or connection with you for them, regardless of what you're doing. So you have to question all of these assumptions. Like, you're just telling this to me like you're reporting on the weather. I show my love to others by putting their needs first. But that's actually a made-up thing. That's just a thought in your mind. That's just a sentence in your brain. If you didn't believe that sentence, you would not have this problem.

And then you say, I value my genuine relationships with others, which is an amazing sentence, right? Because they're not fucking genuine, right? You're seeking external validation, you're people-pleasing, and you're putting other people's needs in front of yours just so you can feel okay about yourself. That's not genuine. You're not telling them the truth. You're not being genuine. But you tell yourself that this is how you show love so that you can call it genuine. It's not genuine. It's lying.

And that's okay. That doesn't mean there's something wrong with you. We all do that. And probably some, at least some, maybe all of these relationships will still endure and be even better when you are honest. But you have to look at how you're like kind of skating around the truth with other people and how you're talking about this to yourself in a way where you get to dress up your people-pleasing, which is all about your own ego, as being about this genuine relationship and showing your love. That's not what it is. You really have to separate those.

And then the last part, you say, I feel as though I'm not there for them. That's not a feeling, that's a thought. And of course you do, because you've got this all wrapped up. You've got this story that the way to be there for other people is to lie to them, right? About who you really are and what you really want. And then you think that creates an authentic connection that

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makes you feel good. You really got to separate that. Your feelings of connection are created by your own brain and your thoughts, not by anything you do for other people. And external validation and people-pleasing has nothing to do with feeling real love and connection.