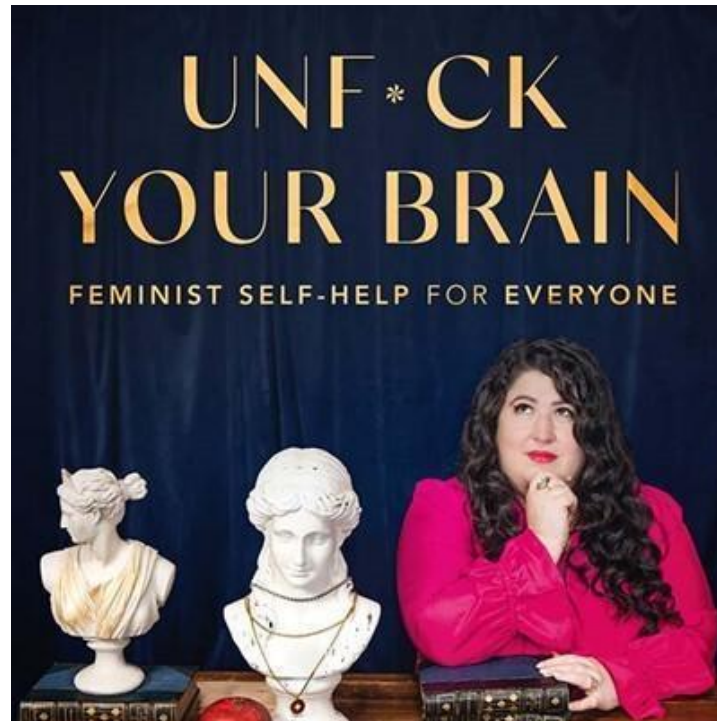


UFYB 505: Coaching Hotline: What Humility Actually Means & Why You Wear Makeup (and Whether It Matters)



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.

Two interesting questions today. First one. "Hey Kara, you talk a lot about confidence, of course, which is what brought me to your work. But I was wondering if you could talk a little bit about humility. What do you think humility looks like? What role do you think it can play in managing your mind? Do you find it to be a useful concept at all? Thank you."

This is a great question. So, yes, I do think that humility is a useful concept when it's used correctly and appropriately, which I don't think that's how most women use it. I think most women use humility as a cover for insecurity. So rather than tell the truth, which is that they don't believe they deserve to have the life they want, they don't believe that they are good enough to get the life they want, they don't believe that they have enough value, they call that being humble. But I don't think that's what humility is.

I think humility is the opposite of hierarchy. I think humility is about understanding that as a human to human to human to human, we are all equal. I am not more worthy than any other human alive. I do not have more intrinsic value or intrinsic worth than any human alive. And nothing that can be added to my life externally, no amount of accomplishments, no amount of money I make, no matter what kinds of relationships I have,

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none of that can make me better or more worthy or more valuable than another person.

So to me, that's what humility is about. It is sort of the opposite of a quote-unquote big head, but it's like to me, it has nothing to do with confidence. The opposite of confidence is insecurity. The opposite of humility is hierarchy. Some people will say the opposite of humility is pride, but I don't think that's true because if you look, men are encouraged to be proud of themselves all the time. And when I talk about teaching women to be proud of themselves, I mean to be proud of their ability to do hard things and create results they didn't think they could and grow and evolve and blow their own mind. Not to be proud that they possess this object and that makes them better than other people, right? So that kind of pride might be the opposite of humility, but I don't think that pride is the right word.

I think it's hierarchy. I think humility is the opposite of hierarchy. Humility means understanding that we're all just humans and none of us is more worthy or deserving or valuable than anyone else. We're all equally worthy and deserving, infinitely so.

So I think that is humility. And the other thing that comes to mind, I think is related in a way, which is I always want to remain humble about everything out there that I don't know. So it's kind of similar, right? It's not being arrogant is the right word, but it's more just that I want to always be transparent and honest and real about the fact that I don't know everything in the world. How could I? More will always be revealed. More will always be happening. I can control certain things in my life and about me and how I show up and react. I can't control the world, right?

So again, it's sort of like if hierarchy is the opposite of humility, I think maybe another opposite of humility is a false sense of omnipotence. Believing you know everything, believing you can control everything, believing you can control other people and the weather and what happens

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in the stock market and all these things outside of you. Believing that you are the teacher and not the student. I always want to be the teacher and the student. There's always more I can learn. My own practice is always deepening. I'm never at the end of that road.

So it's interesting, actually. It kind of just goes back to hierarchy. I'm sort of thinking this through as I answer this question. There's hierarchy of value, thinking you're more valuable than someone else. And there's sort of hierarchy of knowledge in the sense of I do think I know more about certain topics than some other people might because I've studied them, but I don't ever believe I know everything about a topic. I don't believe I've reached the pinnacle of knowledge ever, that I know everything, that there's nothing left to learn, that I have it all figured out.

So it is sort of, it's almost like a hierarchy of knowledge. That's the opposite. To me, humility is saying, here's what I know to the best of my ability. It's like recognizing my own limited vantage point, my own limited human mind. My mission is to stretch my own limited human mind as far as I can, but knowing that I'm never going to reach the limit. No other human alive ever is either. Nobody ever will, probably.

So I think in those contexts, humility is a useful concept because it's really about equality and open-mindedness. It is not a useful concept when it's a cover for insecurity, lack of belief in yourself, lack of believing you need to be more deserving or more worthy or something else, right? Anytime that humility has to do with thinking well of yourself, like having basic self-love and respect, I don't think it's helpful. And I do think it's a quality that's associated with women. Women are supposed to be humble. We don't really hear that as much about men. Successful men are not criticized for touting their own success, but successful women are often criticized for that. So, great question. I hadn't really thought about humility itself as a concept in this way before, so that was useful for me too.

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Okay, second question. "What is the reason for wearing makeup if thought work is supposed to help us create a healthy body image?"

So, there's no reason for wearing makeup. It's totally a personal decision. Everyone gets to decide. I personally don't wear much makeup in my daily life. I wear makeup in photos because the way that photo technology works, if you don't wear makeup, you can't see your features often. In professional photos or video, you will look washed out. Your features won't stand out. So I wear makeup in photos so that I look mostly like myself without makeup on. That's the best way I can say it. But I do occasionally like to wear a bright lipstick, and it's just because I think it's fun. It's not because I think my lips in their normal state aren't good enough. So it's just like wearing clothes. I think my naked body looks great, and I think my body looks great in clothes. And different kinds of clothes make it look different kind of ways.

So there's no should. It's sort of something about this question seems to imply we're supposed to wear makeup or we should wear makeup, but no, I mean, of course not. If you don't want to, don't. But I think that if you have learned to love how you look, you still often wear something other than a burlap sack, even though that would technically just cover your body enough to go out in public, right? Because clothing and makeup and I mean, I think if you look anthropologically, humans for millennia have been interested in decorating their bodies and using, I think people use clothes and makeup to communicate their own aesthetics, their own style, their own creativity, right? These are all things that humans have always done in all societies, right? Have decorated themselves, have had special outfits for special ceremonies or special rituals or rites of passage. I think that aesthetics and that visual sense are really built into humans. And even if you look at animals, right, like peacocks will display a beautiful tail when mating. It's very evolutionary, very biology based in the beginning.

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So I absolutely don't think anyone needs to wear makeup or should wear makeup if they don't want to. And I personally don't wear a lot of makeup day to day because I just can't really be bothered. But that was true before I did my body image journey and afterwards, right? Which is sort of part of my point almost. It's like, there are people wearing makeup because they haven't done the work to love their skin and face the way it is, and that work is worth doing. And then for some of us, I just wasn't that into makeup, and so I just still am not that into makeup, and that hasn't changed. And someone else might be super into makeup before doing the work and after, or not and then yes, or was and then isn't. There's no consistent pattern it has to follow.

It's not a useful question to ask, should I wear makeup or not? It is a useful question to ask, what are my thoughts about wearing makeup? What kind of feeling do I have about wearing makeup? What am I trying to do by wearing makeup? So the question is never should I take this action or not. The same action can feel amazing or can feel terrible, depending on what you're thinking and feeling. Wearing makeup can feel amazing when you're thinking, I love my face and it's beautiful without makeup, and then it's beautiful in this very different way with makeup, and I love them both. And it can feel terrible if you're thinking my skin is horrible and no one will look at me if I'm not wearing makeup, and I won't look professional, and no one will take me seriously, and I'll die alone, right? Same action, totally different thought and feeling.

So always, the question is, what do I want to think about this? How do I want to feel about it before we get into what action am I going to take? All right. Interesting group of questions this week. I will talk to you all next week.