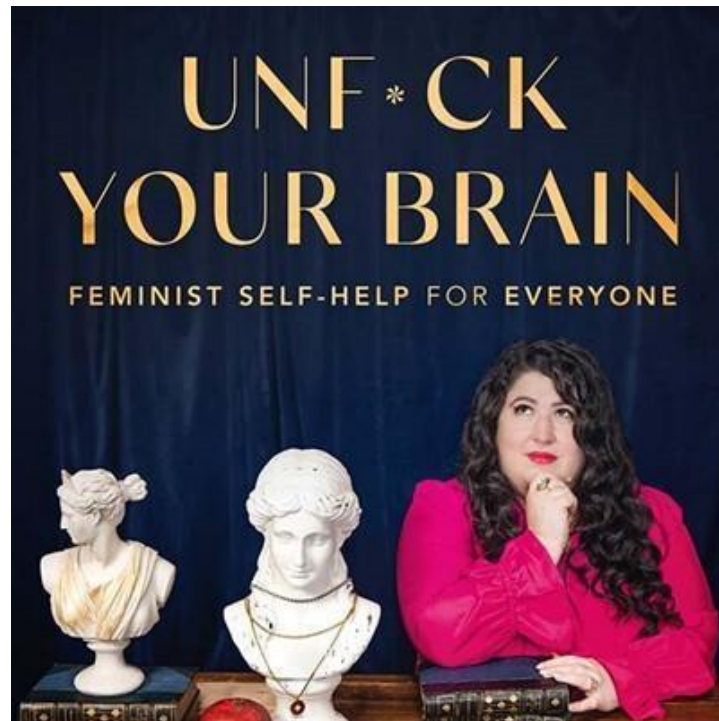


UFYB 519: Coaching Hotline: How Do I Know if I Am Indulging a Negative Emotion?



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 question for this week. "I need more help understanding the difference between experiencing an emotion and wallowing in it. Is it really just that one makes you pause your life and the other doesn't? How do I know when I'm processing versus when I've tipped into indulging?"

This is such a great question. So, I think there's a couple of different ways to think about this. Ultimately, it's going to come down to your discernment and relationship with yourself and practicing and getting a feel for it, but here's what I can tell you are some things to notice or pay attention to.

So the first one is, when you're really allowing an emotion and experiencing it, it'll be over pretty fast. Now, it might come in waves, right? For instance, if we are going through a breakup and we are experiencing grief, or we're going through a loss of someone or something, we're experiencing grief. It's not like it's one and done. Obviously, grief comes in waves. But if we are processing the emotion and allowing it, like real waves, it will sort of crest, peak, and then go down. And then we'll be able to make breakfast or sweep the floor or do an hour of work. And then we might get another wave, right? But then it'll crest and go down.

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So, when we are really allowing emotion and experiencing it, it should be fairly short even if there are repeated cycles of it. When we're, I'm going to use your word, wallowing. I wouldn't necessarily use that word personally. It just feels like it kind of is attributing laziness or moral badness or intent to it. But I think often what's happening is that it's just that we are continuing to think the thoughts that cause the feelings over and over again.

So, when we're in that state, a feeling will stick around, usually because we're not allowing it to actually move through our body. We're resisting the emotion and that is making the emotion stick around because it can't just physically move through us. We're sort of trapping that feeling from moving through us. And that happens, like I just said, one, if we're not willing to allow and process the emotion, but also number two, if we continue to think thoughts that are creating it.

So for instance, if you are mad at someone about something, if it happens and you have an initial thought and there's a true flush of anger and you process and allow it, it will move through your body fairly quickly, right? You might want to do a little primal scream or yell in a pillow or shake it out, whatever. But if you allow it to go through, it'll go through. If you don't allow that and instead you get in your head and start ruminating and you start thinking about how wrong they are and you come back to it, you think about it again and again and again, and you're not coaching yourself and you're not changing your thoughts. You're just thinking over and over about how wrong they are. That's when you end up in what I think you're calling wallowing, which is just sort of this emotion sticking around and coloring everything and revving you up over and over without any release.

So, that's how I feel the difference in myself. Am I really allowing an emotion such that it peaks, it crests, it then goes down and that's fairly quick even if there might be another wave later? And when that's happening, I'm really experiencing it in my body. Or am I more up in my head ruminating and going over it and over it and continuing to create this

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negative emotion without coaching myself, without allowing the emotion, without changing my thoughts?

So that's how I would define it. I don't really think that how do I know if I'm processing versus indulging is the most helpful framing because again, it sort of implies that you're doing something wrong when you're indulging. And I don't really think it's about that. I think it's generally just you're not really allowing it or you're not coaching yourself on the thoughts, so you just keep recreating it for yourself.