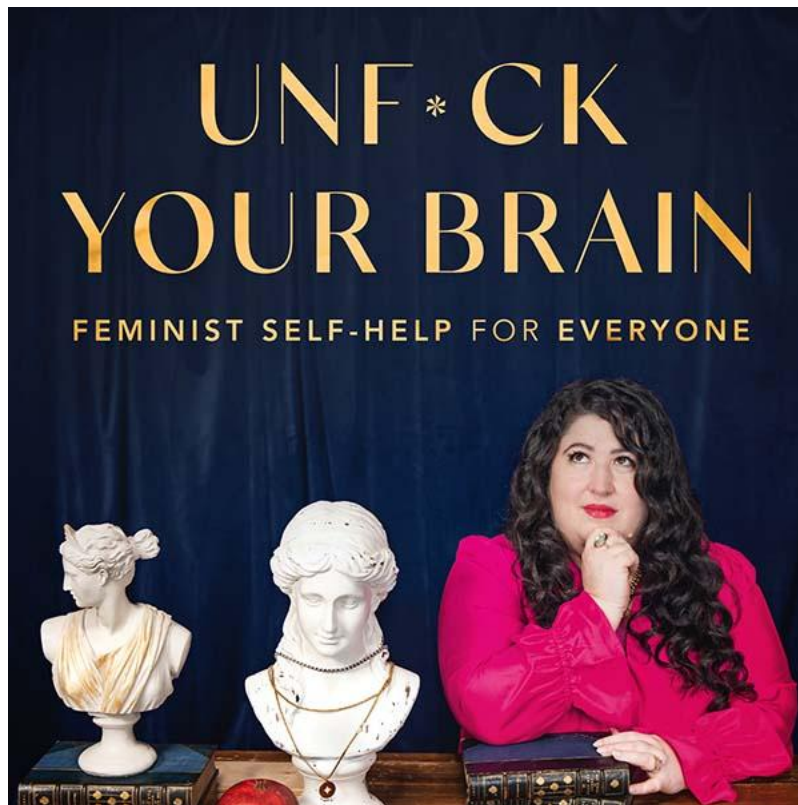


UFYB 523: Coaching Hotline: How Can I Stop My Constant Inner Critic & Monologue



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. "One of my habitual inner monologues is mentally recounting everything I've accomplished that day. Work projects, exercise, errands, as if I'm reporting it to someone to prove my worth. I know my brain is trying to justify my existence through productivity. I've already stopped making endless to-do lists. How do I quiet this internal cataloging?"

This is such an interesting question. Anytime we're having thoughts and we don't want to have them, we can't tell ourselves to stop thinking a certain way. Your brain doesn't work that way. It doesn't really have a mechanism to stop thinking a certain way. We can't just turn off a thought circuit. Plus, when we tell ourselves, "Don't think that, don't think that," we're actually just focusing on it more and drawing more attention to it.

So there are two techniques I would recommend here. One is when you notice it happening, rather than judging it, telling yourself you should stop, saying yourself, "Oh, why do I keep doing this? Why can't I stop? This is so fucked up." Notice all the story you have about this inner monologue. And try to replace that with simply noticing. Oh, I notice my brain is trying to

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justify my existence right now. How human of me. I have compassion for that.

Try to notice when you are reacting to this inner monologue and giving it meaning, telling a story about it, and just practice bringing that sort of watcher energy to it. I notice that this is happening. So that's step one in changing a thought is practicing replacing reactivity to it or a thought pattern, practicing replacing reactivity to it with more compassionate, curious noticing.

The second is to redirect. We can't say, "Oh, I notice I'm doing this. Brain, just be quiet and be silent." That doesn't work. We have to give the brain something else to think. So I would come up with a thought that you want to think on purpose when you notice that happening, but again, it can't be something like, "Oh no, I noticed I'm doing it. Ah, that's so bad. I have to stop. What's my other thought?" That kind of frantic or reactive energy will not be successful.

It's, "Oh, I notice that's happening. I have so much compassion. How human of me. Of course I'm doing that." And then redirect to whatever your new thought is that you want it to be. So it could be something around worth not being tied to productivity. It could be, "I love myself no matter what I've gotten done." It could be like, "That's great. I did a bunch of stuff and rest is also great." It could be whatever you want to communicate to yourself in that moment. But the key is to take down the reactivity, notice without being reactive, and then redirect.

You really can't just tell your brain to stop thinking a certain way or to quiet down or whatever, because your brain doesn't have a mechanism for that and it needs a different chew toy. It needs a different instruction. It doesn't work to just tell it to stop. We have to stop being reactive ourselves, start being curious and compassionate, and then redirect to something else we

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want to think on purpose. And this is true for any thought or thought pattern that you're trying to change.