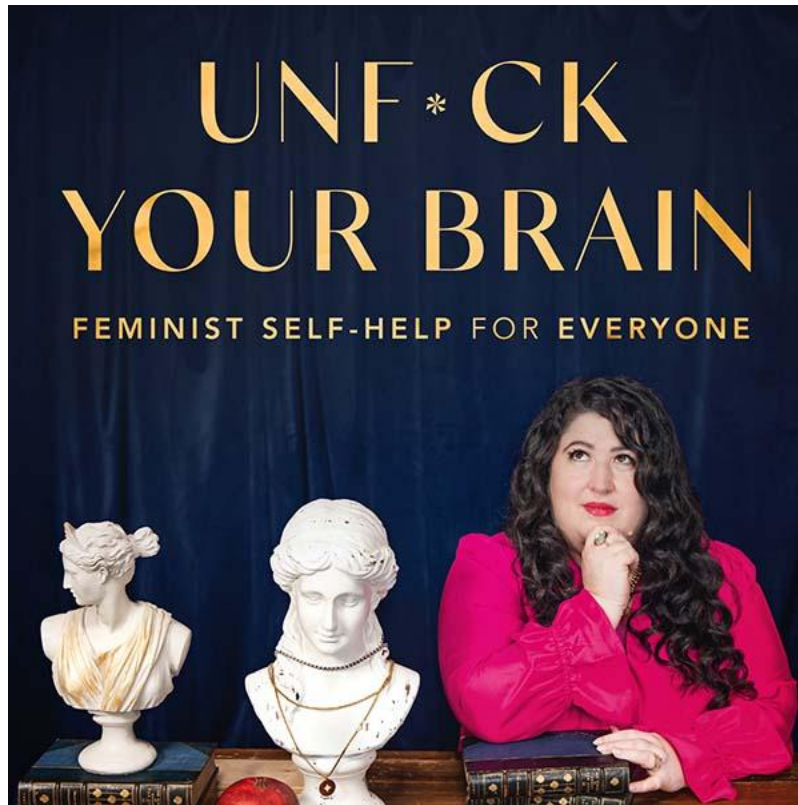


UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kara Loewentheil

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UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

Y'all, I have had a humbling week. So we just opened enrollment for our brand new challenge. It's called How to Ask for What You Want, and I've been immersed in all the cognitive science and thought work and somatics around how to teach women to ask for what they want. And if you are someone who needs to learn how to ask for what you want, you should join us. You can go to unfuckyourbrain.com/whatyouwant, all one word.

But a big part of it, obviously, involves being willing to say your truth about what you want or need. And meanwhile, at the same time, I've been realizing there was something that I was not telling the truth about myself. So in this episode, I'm going to spill the beans. I'm going to walk you through the self-coaching I had to do recently on a truth that I was not admitting to myself or anyone else. And I'm going to help you understand where you may be hiding the truth from yourself and everyone else. So let's get into it.

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.

When we think about what seems hard about telling the truth about how we feel, we're usually thinking about telling other people the truth about how we feel, right? We imagine telling our spouse we aren't sure that we want to be married anymore. We imagine telling our boss we want to be considered for that C-suite role that's opening up. We imagine telling our sister that we don't really want to come home for Thanksgiving this year.

A lot of our fear around telling other people how we feel comes down to our fear of their reactions. We fear that our spouse will, of course, feel hurt or rejected. Or maybe even worse, they might seem relieved to hear that we aren't sure about being married anymore. We fear that our boss will think

[UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil](https://unfuckyourbrain.com)

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

we aren't qualified or that we're ungrateful or arrogant for wanting to move up. We fear that our sister will feel hurt or think that we're lazy or a bad sister or a bad daughter.

We'll be talking about that kind of fear of speaking up more soon. But today I want to talk about a type of fear of telling the truth that's harder to spot. When we are afraid of telling someone else the truth, we know we're afraid usually. We're aware of the truth and we fear the consequences. If we tell our spouse how we feel, maybe we're going to have to separate. If we tell our boss we want that promotion and we don't get it, maybe we're going to have to leave the firm. If we tell our sister we aren't coming to Thanksgiving, are we opening the floodgates to more honesty from her about her feelings about us that we don't want to hear?

When we want something but we don't share it, it can be painful, but it still feels safe. It isn't destabilizing anything externally. Our brains hate change and uncertainty, and if we share our true feelings, it opens up the possibility of destabilization, of change, of uncertainty. So we keep quiet because that feels safer, even if it also feels miserable, unfulfilled, frustrating, or whatever else. We know we're holding our tongue. Maybe we wish we could come out with it, but we can't manage to.

If this is you, you are going to want to sign up for that challenge, How to Ask for What You Want. It's exactly what it sounds like. You're going to spend a week with me and I'm going to help you understand exactly why you aren't speaking up and what you'd need to change to be able to. You can join us at unfuckyourbrain.com/whatyouwant, all one word, or text your email to 347-997-1784, and the code word is whatyouwant, all one word. We'll send you all the details.

So knowing you aren't speaking up about a feeling or thought or desire or a need that you're consciously aware of is one thing. We're going to be working on that in the challenge. But what about those things we don't want

[UnF*ck Your Brain with Kara Loewentheil](https://unfuckyourbrain.com/whatyouwant)

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

to tell ourselves the truth about? What about those things we don't want to accept are true? Sometimes we're scared to admit the truth to ourselves because we feel ashamed of it. We are judging our own thoughts or feelings, and if we brought them fully into our consciousness, we'd shame ourselves even more. Sometimes we're scared to admit the truth to ourselves because we aren't sure what the consequences will be. As long as we're lying to ourselves, we can put off those consequences.

Sometimes we're scared to admit the truth to ourselves because we have an entire story about what it will mean if we finally admit it is true. And that's what I realized was going on with me this week. But it wasn't easy to recognize because my resistance to accepting and admitting the truth of what was going on was subconscious. And instead, I was shaming and shoulding myself. I was just waiting for my circumstances to change so I wouldn't have to accept the reality of what they are right now.

But I was so invested in doing that, in willful ignorance, because I was believing that if I admitted the truth to myself about how I was feeling, much less shared it with other people around me, that would mean that things would always be this way. My brain had gotten frozen on resistance and I couldn't admit what I was currently experiencing because in my mind that would make it not just real, but permanent. So instead I was trying to just push my way through without admitting to myself or anyone else how I was feeling and what I needed.

So let me take you behind the scenes and share some of what I've been experiencing and how I've been avoiding admitting the truth to myself because of what I was making it mean. Let's set the stage first with what has been going on in my life. I started this business, my coaching career, 10 years ago in 2016. I was certified in 2015, but 2016 was the year I left my legal career and actually got going on my coaching business. When I started, I was about 35. I was single. I was childless. I've always had

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

chronic pain and low physical energy because of hypermobility, but in retrospect, I had a lot of energy.

I also had no real obligations to anyone other than myself. I had a boyfriend, but our lives weren't integrated. We weren't on a path to marriage. I didn't have children. I didn't have family economically depending on me. So in other words, I was able to devote most of my capacity to building my business. I absolutely had a lot of fear, but I also had a lot of excitement. Everything I was doing was new, and there were a lot of tears, but there was also a lot of hyper-focus and motivation because it was all so new and exciting.

And because I was working for myself on my schedule and I didn't really have a team, I could adapt to my brain. If my brain refused to work on a given day, no problem, I could just work on the weekend instead. And I worked a lot because again, motivation, excitement, and hyper-focus. But now, 10 years later, everything is different. I'm 45. I'm married. I have step-kids who live with me half the week. No one in our house is neurotypical. It's a lot of emotional energy to parent, partner, and manage it all, plus a much more complicated life.

And my business is in a different stage. I have an amazing team I can rely on, which is wonderful. But I'm also more mature. I'm not scrambling to figure it all out. I'm not learning at such a rapacious pace. I don't have the same hyper-focus and I have to work in a way that works with a whole team of other people. And most importantly, right now for this story, I'm in perimenopause, and as I'm working out my treatment and coping plan, it's having a big impact on my mood, my energy, my fatigue, and my focus.

Let me say up front, I have a great care team. I'm working with all available options. I do not need or want medical advice. But the reality right now over the last couple of months is that my capacity is often really reduced from what it used to be. Now, I was never someone who had an eight-hour of

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

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

brain activity a day. But I used to have a four good hours most days. And now it often feels like it's maybe two hours a day. And some days it's none.

In the past, when I had a day my brain didn't work, if I just let it go for the day, I usually woke up refreshed and ready to go the next day. But now when I have that kind of day, I often wake up the next day to another one of those days. You'd think this is not something a person could really lie to themselves about. And I wasn't lying to myself about how I was feeling in the moment, but I was really resistant to acknowledging it in a bigger way because I subconsciously believed if I admitted that this was how things really were right now, that meant I was accepting things would be like this forever.

In my subconscious mind, if I kept treating this day, this week, this month as an aberration, I didn't have to admit that it was my reality right now. And if I did admit it was my reality right now, then that meant it would be my reality forever. And that meant accepting that I'd always be irritable. I'd always feel overstimulated. I would always feel tired. And I would never be able to grow my business and I might not even be able to maintain it. That's what my brain was telling me. So that's where I was stuck for months. After this quick break, I'll share how I finally broke through this block and how you can use what I learned on your own challenges and suppressed truths you aren't telling yourself, too.

So what was happening while I was ignoring my reality? Since I would not admit the reality to myself that this was probably going to keep being the case for the temporary future at least, I did not make any adjustments to my workload or my work focus. I just tried to do all the same things and felt overwhelmed all the time. But I wouldn't let myself figure out how to add support because in my mind, if I admitted I could not do it all right now, that meant I was not going to be able to maintain or grow my business. And then support would just be adding an expense, and then we would have less revenue and profit and the whole cycle.

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

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

This is completely backwards now that I can see clearly because, of course, hiring someone to take work off my plate that someone else could do would free up my brain to use the capacity it has on stuff that does move the dial on revenue and scaling. But obviously, I wasn't thinking clearly. Because I've done a lot of self-coaching, I was at least not beating myself up during this process. If it had been a decade ago, I absolutely would have been. But I was still resisting reality and believing it should be different and that I could not accept the way it was.

And it wasn't until I was working through the materials I've created for our how to ask for what you want challenge that I realized what I was doing. In this challenge, we take you through figuring out what it is that's blocking you from telling the truth or asking for what you want. And when I looked at what would make the biggest change in my life, I realized it would be delegating certain things in the business that I still do, but could theoretically be assisted or completed by someone else.

I needed to ruthlessly prioritize to make the most of my currently reduced capacity. But if I was going to do that, I had to tell the fucking truth. I had to tell myself the truth about my current capacity, about my resistance to it, about my fears of what it meant. I was going to have to tell my team the truth and deal with all the drama I have around working fewer hours than my team or my fear of my team thinking that I don't do enough. I was going to have to ask for help, whether that meant getting help from my existing team or hiring someone for extra help.

But here's the unlock that helped me shift this and this is what you can use too. So much of my resistance was from believing that whatever truth I was going to tell would become real as soon as I said it, and then it would become permanent. Which meant that I was creating the thing I feared. That's what the coaching model we use shows us, right? Our thoughts become our returns. We create our outcomes with how we think.

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

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

So when I was refusing to admit I had limited capacity because I was telling myself that meant I would not be able to maintain or grow my business, then I was spending my capacity on whatever I happened to have up next on my list or whatever was most urgent. I was not prioritizing the most important things that would actually move the needle. Which meant that probably my business would have eventually struggled if I kept this up. Not because it's not possible to maintain or grow with less capacity, but because by refusing to admit I had less capacity, I was blocking myself from prioritizing what I really needed to use it on.

So I reminded myself of two core things that you can use too. First, whatever is true is true, whether I admit it or not. My capacity is what it is, whether I like that fact or not. I can fight it and make my life worse, or I can accept my current reality and figure out how to make my life better. And the same is true for you. If you aren't sure you want to stay married, that's what's happening whether you like it or not. The more you refuse to admit it to yourself or tell your spouse, the less you're going to like being married.

If you want to be promoted, that's a desire in you that is there, even if you're scared of it. If you don't want to schlep to Thanksgiving, that's not going to go away just because you ignore it. And if you go, you're going to enjoy it even less. Second, admitting something is happening does not mean that it magically becomes permanent or that I am accepting that it's permanent and can't do anything to make it better. It means admitting this is what's going on for me right now. If I want something to be different in the future, that can only happen from admitting the reality of what is happening now. I can't solve a problem I won't admit is happening.

Those thoughts helped me accept the reality of my reduced capacity right now, because reminding myself that it would not go away from ignoring it, but that accepting it didn't make it a permanent reality, reduced my fear and resistance. Because I hadn't wanted to admit the truth to myself or to tell anyone else, I had been telling myself that certain things in my business

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

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

that I was spending a lot of time on weren't a big deal or shouldn't take so long, so I had to keep doing them. But once I started thinking about my work from a place of, this is how much capacity I have, how do I want to spend it in reality, I immediately was able to ruthlessly prioritize. So I delegated out something in my business that I didn't really need to be doing anymore.

My team was getting about 90 to 95% of it right already, and I needed to just accept that a five or even 10% rate of things I would have done differently was not worth the energy right now. Second, I told my COO we needed to hire someone for specialized support in one area where I had been telling myself I should be able to keep doing this because it was something I'd done for years. But the reality is that it used to represent probably 10% of my capacity, and now it was closer to 25 to 30%. And since I wasn't enjoying it, it made it even harder to do with less ability to push through. So I told her we needed to hire support so that I could reduce the amount of time and capacity spent on that area at least for now.

And I'm giving you these details because I want to show you what it looks like to ask for what you need or want. And third, I told my team the truth about what was going on for me. I didn't like call an all-staff meeting to announce perimenopause, but by the time the podcast is published, everyone will know if they didn't already. But when I told my team members that I was delegating, or when I told my COO about hiring, I told them my capacity was part of the issue right now and why I needed to be really more strict with my prioritizing.

Because of course, the truth my brain couldn't see when it was in resistance is that my team wants me to prioritize what maintains and grows the business. If we don't have that revenue, they don't have jobs, right? It is in everyone's best interest if I use my capacity on the highest impact areas. And that is true for you, whatever your role is, whether you're a business owner or not.

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

UFYB 528: Telling Yourself the Truth (How I Finally Did)

And from there, I was even able to get to gratitude, right? Gratitude I have a team that can support me during a challenging period. Gratitude I built a business that can operate without me having to be fully on seven days a week. Even gratitude that this is probably forcing a reckoning that needed to happen anyway in terms of where I was spending my time and how often I was telling myself I would just get to those bigger priorities later down the line. All of that was on the other side of telling myself and my team the truth. And even writing this podcast felt lighter and faster today than writing the last 10 podcasts have.

So that's the last piece I want to leave you with. My brain told me that admitting the truth was going to be painful and bad. But in fact, it's only made things better. You don't have to believe your brain is 100% wrong about what will happen if you tell the truth. But you can practice believing that your brain may be wrong about it. Your brain may be catastrophizing. Reality is what it is, whether you tell the truth about it or not. Telling the truth about something doesn't make it permanent. And you can't always trust your brain about what will happen after you do. It's usually going to work out better than you think long term.

If you need to learn how to actually have these conversations and get yourself through it like I did, then you need to join our How to Ask for What You Want challenge. You can join us at unfuckyourbrain.com/whatyouwant, all one word, or text your email to +1-347-997-1784. And when you are asked for the code word, type whatyouwant, all one word. We'll send you all the details. I'm going to be teaching you a specific script and approach for having those hard conversations, asking for what you want, telling the truth about how you feel to make it easier for you to speak up in your own life.