

Ep #173: Weight Loss and Grief: An Interview with Dr. Katrina Ubell



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Krista St-Germain

[The Widowed Mom Podcast](#)

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Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, episode 173, Weight Loss and Grief: An Interview with Dr. Katrina Ubell.

Welcome to *The Widowed Mom Podcast*, the only podcast that offers a proven process to help you work through your grief, to grow, evolve, and create a future you can truly look forward to. Here's your host, Master Certified life coach, grief expert, widow, and mom, Krista St-Germain.

Hey there, welcome to another episode of the podcast. I have a dear friend of mine and a weight loss expert, Dr. Katrina Ubell on the podcast for you today. I know that not everyone listening wants to lose weight and that's okay. I hope you'll listen anyway because a lot of what Katrina and I talk about and a lot of the wisdom and little nuggets that Katrina share really are so much bigger and more important than weight loss. And I'm not saying that that's not important. For some people it's very important.

But so much of what we struggle with in grief, the feelings piece specifically can be exactly what holds us back from things that we want to accomplish, including weight loss. Katrina also just wrote a book called *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time: Brain Based Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss*. And so of course we talk all about her book. And she shares with you some of her grief related weight loss struggles and I hope you really enjoy it. I just love Karina and I love talking to her. And I'm happy to share her with you on the podcast.

Before you take a listen I also want to let you know that we have decided to add something which I think is really valuable and that is for those of you who have been interested in joining Mom Goes On, maybe you've already applied and had your application accepted but you haven't actually joined. Or maybe you're considering applying but you haven't yet. We have decided to add a special call. And that call is designed to make sure that you get a chance to be heard.

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I know for so many women that are thinking about joining and they want the extra support. But there's always some worries in the back of our mind that it's not going to work for us or that there's something unique about our situation. Or that other people can do it but maybe given some particulars about our lives that we won't be able to. And so, what I want to offer you with this call is the chance for you to really feel heard, for someone who understands grief, to get on the phone with you, learn about your story, and what you've been through, and where you are, and what's going on for you.

Make absolutely sure that what we offer is what you need and that you can be successful doing it. And then personally answer any questions that you have, put your fears to rest before you make an investment. Because joining Mom Goes On is a big investment. And so, if you have already applied and been accepted then you can email us at support@coachingwithkrista.com. We will send you the calendar link and then you can hop on the phone with Patty.

Patty, I'm going to have Patty on the podcast at some point in time. Patty, she is no stranger to grief. She lost her first husband. She is also a Master Certified coach. She deeply understands what we are doing in the Mom Goes On program. She deeply understands grief. She has one of the warmest best laughs I've probably ever heard and she is just, she's just a lovely person. So, I know that you're going to feel well taken care of. I know that you're going to feel heard.

I know that she will put you at ease because calls like this can be scary, I know it. And we don't want you to feel scared. We want you to feel comfortable. And so, Patty is just the person for that. So, if you have already applied, send us an email, support@coachingwithkrista.com. We will respond with Patty's calendar link and then you can find a time to hop on the phone with her.

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If you have not applied for Mom Goes On and you've been thinking about it, then once you do and assuming your application is accepted and we believe based on what you put in the application that it is a good fit for you and that we can help you. Then we will send you the link to that calendar and you can schedule your very own call with Patty. It's free of course. But that way you can feel extra supported, we can make sure that it really is a good fit for you. And then if it is, we can get you started as quickly as possible.

Alright, so just wanted to let you know that that is now available to you. I'm very excited to be able to make that offer to you again because we haven't done these kinds of calls in quite a while and I'm very excited to bring them back. Alright, so let's jump into my interview with Dr. Katrina Ubell and I hope you enjoy.

Krista: Katrina Ubell, I am excited that you are here. For those listening we just spent – I don't know – 20 minutes of our recording time catching up because we haven't talked in a while. But you've written a book and you're here to tell us about it. I'm excited.

Katrina: Krista, thank you so much for having me here. I am so, so, so excited to be here. Thank you so much and yes, it's so good to catch up. We could just take three hours and do that but maybe we should have a conversation people want to listen to.

Krista: We could, I know, we need to schedule outside of it. Yeah, right, because they don't care about our personal lives. I don't understand. I don't understand.

Katrina: Right, how our kids are doing.

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Krista: So, okay, before we jump into the topic at hand, why don't you just introduce yourself and tell listeners a little bit about who you are.

Katrina: Yeah. So, I'm Katrina Ubell. I am a life coach but before that I was a doctor. I worked as a pediatrician for over 10 years. And really was living what I had thought was the life that I wanted to live, that I'd worked very hard and over many years to create. And on paper, yeah, things were really, really pretty good. But what I really struggled with for a long time was my weight. And I would gain weight and lose weight. And it was about 40 pounds ish each time.

And it was just this regular, it was almost like this predictable part of my life, over the course of time I started remembering, oh yeah, this is around the time of year that I go back to Weightwatchers. And then recognizing even this is around the time of year when I stop following the plan. And I tried other things in the mix in there too. And if I really back it up I mean I developed some emotional eating habits even as a child even really pretty early. But I didn't really struggle with my weight significantly until medical school.

And that's really when we are put in a position where if we had any coping skills before or hobbies that we enjoyed, it was things like interests, things that you do on the side because they're fun. Over the course of time, you end up just having to give those up because you just do not have time. You're too exhausted. You're standing too much. You're working too much in the hospital. And then of course in our medical training as well.

And so, I just really thought I liked food. And I thought that was the problem. And I was kind of somewhat into health a lot too, not to the point where some people will say I was almost like a nutritionist. I wasn't that deep in it. But I definitely was interested in what the latest health fads were, trying to follow that, yet still totally overeating. I loved watching cooking

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shows and getting cookbooks, and magazines, and baking a lot and things like that. And I just could not figure out why I couldn't have just some peace around food and my body.

And I knew, I think deep down I definitely knew that some of my behaviors were a little odd like my husband taking the kids up to bed. And I'd be in the pantry eating after we'd just eaten dinner. So, I clearly wasn't hungry but eating chocolate chips, or eating Graham crackers or things like that. But I just kind of, I don't know, I just didn't think it was that big of a deal. And so, I was approaching 40 years old and was kind of reevaluating everything. And I realized this is not making sense actually.

From a logical perspective, you keep going back to Weightwatchers. You keep swearing that you're going to keep the weight off, particularly after I'd had my last baby. I lost the weight and then I promptly regained it back just like, what are we doing. Somehow we are missing something here. And that led me on a path to trying a whole bunch of other things that helped me to understand what emotional eating was, that I actually indeed was an emotional eater.

I had really rejected that term thinking that that was for people who were emotionally unstable. People who really struggled in life, where I identified as someone who was very highly functional and a very judgmental viewpoint of what it would mean to be an emotional eater. And then I realized, oh no, emotional eating is just eating for any reason other than physical hunger. And I was like, "Oh, well, if that's what it is then for sure I do that. I'm definitely an emotional eater."

So, then it was through life coaching that I actually was able to lose weight and keep it off. I mean I didn't even know what life coaching was. But I did recognize that there was this emotional component that I did not know what to do with. I was very disconnected from how I felt which was also

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something I'd been trained to do in my medical training. You just have to stuff down your emotions and be professional and move forward. And there's just really – there was nothing taught to us on what to do with those emotions after the fact.

So, I just ate of course to keep them down, not knowing that that's what I was doing. And then with life coaching I recognized all this stuff and realized, you know what? It's not that I have a crazy busy life as a doctor. It's not because there's something wrong with my body or me. I just didn't understand, well, when you let a body function the way it's physiologically meant to function and you kind of separate or in my mind, I think of it as a divorce, divorcing your emotional health and life from whether your body needs food or not then this solves the problem.

And this is actually permanent weight loss and what I describe as peace and freedom around food. So not sitting there, if there's cookies on the table or something, having intrusive thoughts about, should I have some. Or you're upstairs and you know the cookies are on the plate on the table. And you're like, I should go get some. Or you guys, we've got to finish these up or I've got to throw them out because I can't have them in the house.

I remember sitting in meetings where there was food on the table for everybody to share and I couldn't even pay attention to the meeting because I'm just thinking, has anyone taken any? Should I have some? Should I grab some on the way out? Would it be weird if I did that? I mean literally consumed with the idea of food. So, in figuring all that out and understanding how to apply this to a busy doctor's life because there is a lot of unpredictability.

There are emergencies that come up and that can often be really big obstacles to figuring out overeating and weight loss. I started helping other

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women physicians with this as well, thinking I can't possibly be the only one who is struggling with this because of course there was no help, nobody was helping us. And so that's what I've been doing for the last six years.

And then fast forward to a couple of years ago when I decided I wanted to write a book, what has happened is my podcast called Weight Loss for Busy Physicians, I started noticing that I had a lot of listeners who were not doctors. And I thought, well, that's interesting considering that the title is Weight Loss for Busy Physicians. And people would say, "Well, I found this just by searching for weight loss podcasts and I thought what's different about being a doctor? I want to know."

Or they would say that their doctor actually recommended that they listen to my podcast. And so, people were getting help even though I wasn't really speaking directly to them, but they were getting a lot of help with what I was sharing. And I thought, well, what would really help doctors and just people in general is if I kind of package this up into a book form so that it's not like, hey, go listen to hundreds of episodes of a podcast to get some help. Let's make this digestible, a way that people can get the help that they need.

And so that's this book which is called How to Lose Weight for the Last Time.

Krista: Amazing. I feel so much of what you said has my wheels spinning because I'm like yeah, people listen to my podcast that aren't really, you know, they're not widows. And how can I make it more digestible? Because it does get to be a lot to wade through all of those episodes. So, okay, I have lots of questions. One of the things that's jumping out at me as I'm just kind of thinking about you and how I've come to know you is it must have been really early on in getting to know you.

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I just remember sitting in a hotel, the fancy room, whatever you call it, the little lounge. And talking to you about life and your coaching world, and your life. And why I think it's kind of coming to mind was I remember you sharing a really honest grief experience with me. I don't even remember how that conversation came to pass. But knowing what you know now I guess, and you're not a widow obviously but I don't think that matters.

I would love to talk to you a little bit about how you see the similarities of grieving, allowing feelings, eating, connecting with your body, what do you see from your perspective based on your own grief experience and what you teach?

Katrina: Yeah. So, I mean I'll just be open about what happened because if I were listening to this I'd be like, what happened? Is she going to say what happened?

Krista: Mind you, I feel better about you opening that up than me, yeah.

Katrina: Absolutely. So, in 2010, so this is 12 years ago now which is crazy. I had a full term stillborn baby. So, I was nine days overdue just I was literally scheduled to be induced the next day, went into labor on my own and she died while I was laboring at home. And this was very much a wanted baby. And we had actually struggled with some infertility leading up to this. We had already had one child and it was just a complete and utter shock. Definitely something I thought could never happen to me. Just really turned my life on its head.

And I'm sure your listeners can recognize, it may not be the exact same person that we lost but just I mean...

Krista: You didn't see it coming, you didn't ask for it. It was a loss.

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Katrina: I didn't see it coming, yes. Blindsided, I mean absolutely blindsided. And my family overall, my extended family is pretty small. I'd only had one living grandparent my whole life and she died when I had just turned seven. So, I was still quite young. And I just really hadn't had any kind of real grief experience up until that time. And so, I recognized at the time, I don't know how to do this. My other child was four, four and a half when this happened.

And I remember just thinking, especially as a pediatrician, I would like to be thoughtful in how we approach this with him. I don't want him screwed up because of this. And so, kind of right away I was on Amazon, what are the books about babies dying. Apparently there's way more now than there were back then. But I basically bought every single one that I could find and read them all. And luckily had some other support. I had actually worked with a therapist just a little bit when I was struggling with the infertility stuff.

And so, I got in to see her a couple of days later. And there was even a psychiatrist who specialized in postpartum or, well, I guess, depression during pregnancy and depression after pregnancy and postpartum loss or pregnancy loss. So, I only saw her a couple of times. But seeing her was really helpful because she just reassured me that I was grieving. And this is normal. And feeling like you want to die every single day all day long, feeling so bad inside, that's what I mean by that.

Literally the feeling inside my body, feeling so awful was normal. It was actually really helpful because I didn't know, was that normal or not. But one thing that really has really carried with me these 12 years is in one of the books, and I'm not a person who can remember quotes very well. But in this one book it said, grief is patient, it will wait for you. And I was like, "Oh." And there's other descriptions on, you can try to skip this but it will just manifest itself in a different way.

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And one of the ways that they suggested it could happen is by gaining a bunch of weight. They said you could gain a 100 or more pounds, that this happens. People's relationships break apart, all kinds of things that happen when you aren't willing to process the grief. And just to back up, I knew nothing about life coaching, I had zero skills during this time at all.

Krista: And were still struggling with your weight at that point?

Katrina: I was still struggling with my weight, for sure. And then of course what's really fun is overeating during your pregnancy. And then not having a baby and having all the pregnancy weight to lose weight without a baby to breastfeed or things like that. It was like the loss and then also the body kind of evidence of it, that was super, super tough. And so, I had lost that weight again almost, I wouldn't say extreme but the hunger almost felt slightly punishing, almost like I kind of deserved it. I kind of wanted to feel, maybe it was even wanting to just feel something different than grief.

You know what I mean? Almost a distraction from that. So, I really had to figure out what does it mean to process grief, to be with grief? And I worked with a therapist and my husband and I worked a little bit with a couples therapist. And we did various other things and I read, and I kind of joined a couple of different sort of small support groups for a little while. And just kind of bumbled my way through it. I mean is there a way to do it besides bumbling through? I think everybody just bumbles their way through.

Krista: Now when we're living forward, yeah, maybe with hindsight. So, knowing what you know now about weight loss, about processing emotion and about grief, what do you think you would go back and tell that version of you?

Katrina: Yeah. I mean I would just tell her that it's completely normal and yes, it feels super bad. Kind of all the things people told me. I remember

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someone saying, “Time will heal, it really does get better.” And I was like, “Well, then someone needs to fast forward the time because I cannot do this. I need to know when this is going to get better. It feels so bad.” But I think that would be my advice again too. And actually, recently something happened that was not nearly on the same level of gravity but still felt really, really bad inside my body.

And one of the ways that I got myself through the first couple of days was reminding myself when Vivian died, you thought it would never get better and it did. And right now, it feels like it’s never going to get better but it will. It was almost like coaching myself through, reminding myself, you got through that, you’re able – and by through that I mean incorporating it into my life. I just want to be clear. I think we don’t ever want to talk about grief like you get over it, you’re done with that necessarily, but just being patient.

And I think the other thing is I was quite disconnected from myself at the time, and my body, and my emotions, and the more you can connect to that even when it feels really bad. It actually is helpful in the sense that you don’t have to lean so heavily on other things like food, or withdrawal, or reactions, or whatever it may be, drinking or whatever it is. You can stay with yourself in the pain and for as long as it takes essentially. And so, I think that’s really, I don’t know if it’s advice. I think for someone who’s in that level of pain, it just hurts.

I don’t know that anything can really make it feel better. But I think it’s helpful to know this is normal. And you’re not doing something wrong. It’s not like other people have figured it out and you missed the memo, and somehow you’re screwing it up or something like that. Of course, high achievers will know what I’m talking about, feeling like I’ve got to figure out how to do this right, whatever that means. But I think that that’s kind of that throughline is if you’re willing to feel grief, if you’re willing to process that grief then there’s no reason that you can’t process other emotions.

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Sometimes when we're feeling grief or those really intensely negative emotions, we don't want to eat. We feel sick. We feel nauseous. We're having that really strong physical response. But we definitely will be, you know, it's more common to eat when we're frustrated, or annoyed, or lonely, or just that low grade irritation that I think a lot of people feel these days. And it's really not different, it's just recognizing, it's literally the same thing.

So, I remember thinking, just like I was committed to feeling that grief because of that quote, grief is patient, it will wait for you. Well, so will all the other emotions too.

Krista: Yeah. And many of them can be a part of grief. I think it's interesting how sometimes people define grief so differently. Some people think about it as an emotion. Some people think about grieving as in actions or behaviors. I kind of think about it as the term for all of it, all of our thoughts, and all of our feelings, and all of our actions as it pertains to the loss. And so, if we broaden it up and take what you said and still apply it, it's not just the grief as in one single emotion that way. It's all of those emotions that are asking for us to be felt.

Katrina: Right, exactly. Exactly. And I think that the more we can even just recognize that as a concept the better off we are. The way I always think about, just knowing how my own journey, and whenever someone tells me that I have to do something a certain way or it feels very kind of strongarmed on me or whatever, I just immediately resist.

Krista: Rebel.

Katrina: But what I like to do is to sort of give myself an invitation that I could maybe consider, of the possibility that something like that might be useful. You can see how it's very kind of circuitous. So, I'm getting myself

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there. But can I just open up my mind to the idea that maybe feeling these emotions could create the kind of experience that I'm wanting in the long run? And by refusing to feel them now it actually creates more pain for me later. Can I just even sit with that realization?

I don't have to change anything yet, or ever. But can I just be open to the idea that this is a thing? And maybe at some point if I'm ready to make a change, that knowledge would be applicable and useful. And then from there going, "Hey, you know what? Maybe you know what, I am feeling a little activated today? I am feeling frustrated by what's going on? Can I maybe just sit with that even for just five minutes before I reach for the food?" Can I just get to know what that feels like in my body.

I always like to think of it as when we have little kids and we have to teach them emotional words like, "You seem like you're mad right now." They don't know, they don't know what that is. But then we use these words but do we even really know what it feels like? What does it really feel like to be frustrated? How do you know you're frustrated? Just being curious and getting to know yourself and your body, and what it's like to be a human. And then from there making some decisions.

So, what I've found with clients is if let's say frustration is a common reason that they are eating then I'll just tell them, "Don't tell yourself you can't have it, or you shouldn't have it, or it's bad to have it. Just ask yourself to create a little space between when you get the idea to eat the food and actually eating the food, to just figure out what it's like to be you right now. What is the problem that food is solving? Maybe we could just get a little bit more connected to that. And maybe we could just stay with it a little longer." Maybe it's just 30 seconds at first.

And you still tell yourself, and then if I still want to eat after, I can. And then maybe we can go five minutes. And then maybe we can go 10. And then

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maybe we can go 15. And always checking in. Do I even still want this? And what I have found is that clients will come back and say, "I had the worst call week and all these problems and sad things happened. And all these crazy things happened." Normally I would cap it all off with tons of food, tons of alcohol.

And they just recognize, do you know what? Let me just sit with this. Let me see what this really feels like. What is going on for me? And then they're surprised when they realize you know what? I don't even want to eat. I literally do not have the desire to have any alcohol right now. That's the kind of experiential experience that can really help us to see, these are two separate things. I can have my emotional life and deal with my emotions. And when I eat let's eat for either sustenance or pleasure, not to try to avoid how we're feeling.

Krista: Yeah, which I love that you just added the pleasure part too. And not just the sustenance because I think some people...

Katrina: Yeah, it's an important part of life.

Krista: Yeah, but I think some people go so far extreme and you should only be eating for fuel and that pleasure can't be a part of it. And so, I think sometimes the idea of emotional eating gets a bad rap in that people take it to mean you can't eat for joy. You can't get pleasure from food and it sounds like you're not quite [crosstalk].

Katrina: Yeah, not in that camp. I mean if you just think of how the body is designed, how we've evolved and we get pleasure out of food. That's why one of my biggest messages is, you don't have to eat food that doesn't taste good to you. And I know that sounds simple but it's a really big revelation to people who struggle with their weight. All the shakes, and the

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supplements, and the whatever kind of diet versions of foods, or low cal recipes or whatever.

I remember getting peanut butter powder because it was lower fat which is kind of as good as peanut butter but it's not as good as peanut butter, it's not. So that took me a long time to get to but I just don't eat food that doesn't taste good to me. Well, guess what? Then when you're eating food day-to-day, just even for sustenance, just to satisfy your physical hunger, you're also getting pleasure out of it because it tastes good, it feels good in your body, it gives you the energy that you need.

We can work with ourselves and with our physiology to make this work. It doesn't have to be just like punishment or this has to taste like cardboard and you shouldn't care that it doesn't taste good. It's okay if you like to eat food that is palatable to you. There's nothing wrong with that, that's normal. But so often that's not really what we're doing. Or we're at some sort of party, or an event, or a celebration and we're like, "I thought this was going to be more fun." And so, then we're eating or drinking to try to make it more fun which over time actually makes it less fun.

It's almost for some of us we have to increase our capacity to feel the good emotions or to feel the joy. So many of my clients are like, "If I feel too good", they're just waiting for the other shoe to drop.

Krista: Yes, I see that all the time in my clients and also in myself. And it continues to fascinate me at how the more success or happiness I experience, almost the more my brain seems to freak out and worry that either we don't deserve it or it's all going to be taken away, or yeah, that upper limit we've just reached.

Katrina: Yeah, exactly, exactly.

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Krista: So how do you teach people – I have some other questions about feelings too but while we're there. How do you teach people to expand their capacity for things to be good so that they don't need food at the party?

Katrina: Yeah. Well, I think the way that you increase that capacity is first of all looking at that belief that we so often have. And for some people it's cultural or religious, really this, like they've been trained, that if things are too good for you, bad stuff will be attracted to you. Really that's how they've been taught their whole lives. And so, we need to really examine that belief and look for evidence that it's not true and decide what we want, you know, think something different.

I think that one of the reasons why we have such a discomfort for positive emotions is because we are so much more comfortable with the negative emotions. It feels weird to us, so many of my clients will say, "My life is amazing, I have everything I've ever wanted and I don't know why I'm not happier." And I know why they're not happier. The reason why they're not happier is because they're not willing to feel their negative emotions.

So, if you follow me back to high school math, if you think of the sign wave, remember, it's just like out of line, you just have a wave that goes up and down, across that line. And it's equal parts above and equal parts below. When you have a wave like that, if you kind of stretch the line and you make the peaks and the valleys more shallow, it's still equal but the intensity, the amplitude is lower. And so, when we're not willing to feel our negative emotions by default we will experience fear or positive emotions as well. It's just how this works.

So, we if we want to increase our capacity for feeling good emotions we have to create opportunities for us to feel more positive emotions which actually counterintuitively means that we have to be willing to feel the negative ones more. And I think sometimes for myself I just have to kind of

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pause for a second in the positive emotions. Reminding myself, these are the good times, let's just stay with that a little, let's just recognize it. Because when it's the bad times I'm telling myself, this is normal, it's normal for humans to feel this way.

Talking myself through it, but we can be there with ourselves when we're a little nervous about that, knowing that the negative has to come. But if we know that we can handle the negative then we can be open for the positive too.

Krista: Yeah, expands the capacity for the positive.

Katrina: But by expecting the negative to happen which we know is going to happen because it just will. But by waiting for it, it's kind of like, you know what it is? My kids have one more week of summer and I'm already lamenting that summer's over even though summer's not over. Do you know what I mean?

Krista: In advance, yes.

Katrina: In advance, I'm already sad about it and it's still summer. When we can just recognize, no, this is a good time, enjoy it while it's here.

Krista: Yeah, because I can handle whatever it is that's on the other side of it. Okay, so in your book you talk about overeating and over-hunger and how we can work with our brains around those subjects. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Katrina: Yeah. So, I think of it as two different ways. Definitely there's things that physiologically will help our bodies to function the way human bodies evolved to function. If you think about humans as we are being around for 200,000 years. It's really just been the last 100 to maybe 200

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years where really processed foods have even existed at all. And then in the last maybe 30 or 40 years where they're in abundance and they're everywhere. So, for sure our bodies function better when we eat foods that are a little bit more supportive, less processed, things like that.

This is not really a surprise to most of us, we know this. But what we don't realize is how much of our struggle with food that we create with the way that we think, we don't think that it's the way that we think. We think it's just the truth. So, when we see our favorite dessert sitting on the counter we think it's just true that we can't control ourselves or that that looks really, really good, or we have to it or whatever it is. But those are all thoughts that we have about the food.

And those thoughts make our brains really think that thing is super, super important and you'd better have it right now. This is emergency level, you need to have it. And so, then we get those intrusive thoughts, our brains are literally sitting there thinking, you need to have this right now, this is super important. Intrusive thoughts like you need to think about it, that brownie is sitting downstairs. You should just go have it.

I mean that's when people sometimes are like, "I just ate it so I could stop having all the thoughts. I just wanted the food to be gone so I could stop experiencing the intrusive thinking, that intense desire, the urges to go eat it."

Krista: Because then also they think the intrusive thoughts are caused by the food.

Katrina: Right, exactly. And that's why when people start saying, "Well, I can't be around that." Or you can't have that kind of stuff in the house or we're giving so much power to food. And if you really think what food is, it's literally just a digestible substance. It's a bunch of molecules stuck

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together, that doesn't poison us. And if we're lucky maybe it tastes good. And our bodies can process it and get some energy out of it. That's literally all it is. And everything else that surrounds it is the way that we think about it.

And so, when you start to realize that, you can take back your power to determine what your relationship is with that food. How do you want to think about it? Rather than feeling like you're at the mercy of the food, the food controls you. Recognizing that's one way of thinking about it, and when I think about it that way, it creates this experience for me. And recognizing, I mean you don't have to lie to yourself and say, "The brownies don't taste good", when you know that they do. So, it's not that so much.

It's just recognizing when I spin this story, this very romantic emotional story about the brownie, it really makes me want to eat it. And it makes me feel like I'm out of control. So maybe I could spin a different story. That is something that will taste good if I ate it, almost I'm okay if I don't eat it. Sometimes I eat things like that, sometimes I don't. Or when I eat things like that I like to have planned for it so I can really make sure that I enjoy the heck out of it.

I always think of it as wringing out a washcloth. You want to wring out every ounce of pleasure you can get out of that brownie. So, when you're eating, you're not gobbling it down just so it can go away, so you can stop having urges about it. You're actually letting that thing sit in your mouth and tasting how good it is. And experiencing the full pleasure that's available to you. It's a totally different experience. So, the same with hunger too. We have a lot of fear around hunger, where a lot of people worry that if they feel hungry, it's an emergency that needs to be dealt with immediately.

That if they feel too much hunger they might die. And honestly sometimes hunger really does feel super intense and very uncomfortable because of

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the way that we've been eating. So again, going back to the way human bodies physiologically work best sometimes when we're eating in ways that don't support our bodies on a regular basis. When we do feel hunger it can feel much more intense. I think of when people talk about being hangry, a combination of hunger and anger, that is like I am hungry and I'm mad, I'm pissed, and I need to eat everything right now.

That does happen to people but there is definitely the emotional component to that. And of course, when we're eating in a more supportive way we have a tendency to have less of that taking over or feeling like it's such an emergency. So, we just have to recognize, this is just our bodies saying, "Hey, it could be kind of cool if you could eat some food." Also, we have additional fat stores in case you can't eat or it's not a good time right now. And we're also cool, we're tapping into that.

And that's what's so cool about our bodies. I mean our bodies are incredible if you think about it. How could we survive at hunter gatherer times when food was often not available for a long time? Because we have fat stores. So, to think that if we can't eat for three hours that something really bad is happening, that's just not how our bodies function. So, we just have the opportunity to question all of that.

And recognize that when we are afraid of hunger or think about hunger in a way that isn't useful it makes the hunger more intense, it makes it more uncomfortable. We're more fearful of it. And it's literally just a suggestion from the body. So, we can reframe our whole relationship with hunger too. Sometimes my body is truly physically hungry. I eat some food, not all the times, sometimes, most of the time. But think about all the times that you're afraid of being hungry. You're worried you might get hungry so you eat now just in case. Eating now for hunger you might experience later.

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Well, hold on a second, that's not quite right. So that's what we want to be really opening our minds to, this idea that the way we think about things, what we believe to be true about food, about our bodies, about hunger, maybe it's – I mean just could we be open to the idea that that might not actually be the truth or even the only way to think about it? And there could be another way of thinking about it that's more supportive to us, that helps. It makes it so much easier when we believe something different to achieve our goals.

And often we think we're so focused on what are we eating and not eating to lose weight. We don't do this part with our minds. And then we just regain the weight because we still think those brownies are utmost importance and they're not.

Krista: Yeah. And when you talk about stories about food, what that reminded me of is how often we decide and think it's just fact that certain foods are 'good' and certain foods are 'bad'. And we kind of have all of these moral assessments about foods. And then it becomes, you know, you were talking about earlier about how we give foods power over us. But then I think at least for me in my past, I created these, well, I shouldn't have that, can't have it which then makes me want it more.

Katrina: Totally. It's one of the worst things, and first of all, it's a lie. You're an adult, you get to eat whatever you want. Telling yourself you can't or shouldn't have that is first of all just not true because you totally can. And when you do think that way just like you said, it makes us feel more restricted, more deprived, we're not getting our needs met. It's very important that we get our needs met. Therefore, we need to really focus on that thing that we now believe will meet our needs.

We have to go have it and the brain will not stop until we eat it. We've all had that experience, I've had it so many times. And then we make it mean

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something is wrong with us. Obviously something is wrong with me, I have no discipline.

Krista: I have no willpower.

Katrina: Yeah, no willpower, I'm fundamentally a weak person, broken, beyond repair, things. That's what we make that all mean. And so just recognizing wait a minute, it doesn't have to be that way, that's not [crosstalk].

Krista: Which can lead, I think in isolation to so much shame.

Katrina: For sure, so much shame. Yeah. And then imagine being a doctor and then you're supposed to be a health expert. And people can tell that you struggle by looking at your body. And there's just the added layer of shame of I haven't figured this out. I'm a pediatrician so people weren't really asking me for, you know, parents weren't asking me for advice for themselves typically. But I've worked with a lot of doctors who do work with adults, particularly with women.

And they'll say, these women come in and ask, "I want to lose weight, what can I do?" And they're like, "I feel so bad, I feel like such a hypocrite because I'm recommending that they go do Jenny Craig", or whatever the thing is that they themselves have tried and haven't had success with, but they're still recommending it to someone. They just feel like they don't even know what kind of advice to give because they haven't sorted it out themselves and then they feel even worse about themselves and as a doctor.

It's a whole shame spiral that once we recognize what's happening there, it's like, okay, we need to opt out of that because there's nothing wrong with anybody. Doctors are humans just like everybody else. How were any

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of us supposed to know this stuff? I didn't learn it. I wouldn't have struggled for decades had I learned all this stuff earlier. Just it's a different way of approaching things, we just weren't aware of [crosstalk].

Krista: Yeah. Most of what we learn I think we almost have to unlearn. There's so much that we've picked up just by existing as women on the planet, that we have to kind of unlearn. So, what about peace around your body and peace around food? So, let's say someone maybe doesn't even want to lose weight but they want peace around food.

Katrina: If you don't want to then don't.

Krista: Yeah. And they want peace around their body. And I know a lot of people will not believe that's possible, that you can have peace around food and peace around your body without being a particular weight or in a particular sized body which I think is utter nonsense. But how do you teach people to get there to peace?

Katrina: Right. I mean so the way I think of peace and freedom around food is being able to be around all of your favorite foods, all the foods that you used to overeat, all the ones you felt were irresistible. And just not having a strong emotional attachment to those foods. There's not a strong emotional drive to eat them. So, you are looking at that food and going, "I could eat that and I know it would taste good. I could also not eat that and I'm completely fine."

I could take it or leave it, either way is okay. To me that's peace and freedom around food. It's a peaceful coexistence around the food. So, you can go on vacation. You can go to an event or a party and you're not using food as a way to regulate your emotional experience on the inside. That's when you really can start eating for physical hunger because you're like,

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well, yeah, I could eat it or not eat it. Well, I don't know. Does my body need some food? Let me see, am I actually hungry or not?

And then eating if you're physically hungry and just letting it go if you're not going to have it and recognizing there's so many good things to eat in the world. This is not the only thing. It's like an abundance mentality around food. Because there are, I mean countless numbers of amazing things to eat in this whole world. So, if that's the case and you're in Paris at some amazing patisserie, you don't have to eat all the things there because you know what? There's so many other amazing things everywhere in this world.

You're never going to run out of great things to eat. So you don't need to worry that today's your only chance. So that's the way I think about it in terms of food. Peace around our bodies is disengaging from that struggle. And also disengaging from the belief that if I could just get my body to be a certain weight on the scale, or fit into a certain sized clothes, or just whatever shape we deem to be the ideal shape. If we could just get there then we're golden. And then we've arrived. Then we won't have problems anymore, everything will be better.

And I think that's really what so many women are butting up against, going like, "Don't tell me that I have to look this certain way." Yet I actually believe that I have to look this certain way. It's this rejection of that message which is amazing, yes, we all should be rejecting that. But then what we need to do is turn inward and go, "Okay, but what do I actually want? And why do I want it? Do I want to look like that just because that's what's considered the ideal?"

For me I grew up reading Seventeen Magazine, when Kate Moss, the waif look, heroin-chic was the thing. So basically, if you weren't on death's doorstep you weren't thin enough, you know what I mean? So that still, I'm

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in my mid 40s is still in my head is like, “No, but that really is ideal. That’s really the best.” So, what we have to do is that unlearning, recognizing that there’s all different body types. And I was actually just talking to a veterinarian about this. And she was saying, “It’s just like, you know, if you know dogs at all. There’s people who look like a pug and there’s people who look like a whippet.” And a pug can never be a whippet or like a greyhound, a very thin and lean [crosstalk].

Krista: Yeah. And we’re not mad at the pug for not being a whippet.

Katrina: Exactly. So, looking at it, they’re all dogs, but they look different. And we all can look different too. So, what I deal with so many of my clients, they will say to me, “I just want to end this struggle.” So, I had a client recently say, “I read this book.” I don’t know if you swear or not but it’s called The F It Diet.

Krista: Yeah, I’ve read that book.

Katrina: Yeah, that book. And she was like, “But basically it was saying I was going to have to gain weight. And I don’t want to do that.” So, we had to really dig into her beliefs about what she thinks will really be better when she’s thinner. And it really comes down to she thinks she’ll be able to find a partner and then be able to get married, and have a baby, and all these things that she wants. So, it’s basically in her mind the obstacle in the way of her having the entire life that she wants is the size of her body. That’s the setup that she’s created.

And once you start to realize that, you’re like, “Wow, I’m giving my body a whole lot of power to determine my whole experience of my life.” What you have to back down, and take it back several notches to is can I love and respect myself as I am right now and believe there’s nothing wrong with me. And also, at the same time hold space for the idea that it might be

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possible that I could prefer to live in a body that's just a different size or shape. Then if we're working on losing weight it's because we prefer for whatever reason, maybe I sleep better or maybe my joints hurt less.

Or I'm just more comfortable in my day-to-day. If I'm on my feet all day long, my feet don't hurt as bad, my legs don't ache as badly when I don't weigh as much. That's a gift you're giving yourself to decide hey, you know what? I think I'd like to make this a little easier on my body rather than putting so much pressure on, you know, the size of my body will determine all of these other things in my life.

Krista: Yeah. Your happiness, self-confidence, none of it is in the balance.

Katrina: And what I'm realizing too just as I age is that there are just things that happen to your body regardless. So even when you're a thin person your whole entire life there's also changes that happen to your body. So really going through the process of accepting your body as it is, the parts you love and the parts you don't love. And being okay with it, that is actually a really good stepping stone for being able to peacefully age as well.

And just recognizing there's nothing wrong if your skin doesn't quite have the elasticity that it used to have. That doesn't mean it's gross or bad. Or I was talking to someone recently and she was just talking about women's bellies. And I was like, "And whoever decided that a belly was bad?"
Literally why?

Krista: Yeah. We could literally celebrate our bellies, or our skin, or our sags, or whatever instead of shaming them.

Katrina: If you just really think about it, who says that that's a problem? Who says? So, you can decide.

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Krista: Apparently 17 Magazine.

Katrina: So apparently 17 Magazine, exactly. So, you really get to decide what's okay for you and what's not okay for you. And I think sometimes we're just – I mean I'll just tell you, for so many years I pushed up against what truly is just the way my body is designed which is that I put on muscle very, very quickly and easily. And so, think about that waif look, they have no muscle mass. I mean it's just literally not possible. I cannot even move around this world and ever look like that unless I had a serious medical problem. I would be extremely ill to look like that.

So, it's working on letting go of this idea that some certain look is better and recognizing it's how you feel in your body that's the most important thing. What's it like to be you in your body? And I think so many of us just live in our heads. We're like, gross body, I don't like the body for whatever reason. I had chronic pain for many, many, many years, decades, since I was a kid. So that even more so separated me from my body because being in it was physically uncomfortable in a variety of ways. So, in the last several years I've done a ton of work.

And it's truly mindset work and connecting to my body work which has gotten me off of medications I was on for decades. And I'm not saying that this is the cure for every single thing. But I really didn't think I'd be able to get off these medications and I was, I mean it was truly like a miracle it felt like. And so much of that was being willing to go into my body and feel in there. Not just even emotions but what is it like to be me in me in my me suit? Do you know what I mean? What's it like in there? And that relationship building exercise then allows us to create that peace.

We're in this together. Our bodies are trying to do the best for us no matter what, even when we hate them, even when we reject them, those cells they're just chugging along doing the best they can with everything that you

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give them. They're not going to let you down. That's what they're doing. So, it's again a total mindset kind of approach where it's like I'm in it with you, the good and the bad.

When your skin changes, when your hair isn't what it used to be, when lumps and bumps arrive, when illnesses and other issues may change our bodies, I'm in it with myself because I can't do it without my body. It's not possible.

Krista: Yeah. I love you for what you do for me. Yeah.

Katrina: Appreciation, thank you for chugging along, even all those times when I ate total garbage and treated you terribly. You know what I mean?

Krista: And speaking of that too, I think one of the gifts that is available to us when we do the work in terms of how we think about food and the stories that we tell ourselves about food and it actually does become neutral. And we do that same work in terms of our bodies. And we start to see that are bodies are neutral and we can choose to love them or hate them, but really size is not the way.

Then what it also opens up is the ability to eat in ways and move our body in ways that actually feel good to us, that are self-honoring which is such a gift to give ourselves.

Katrina: It's such a gift, exercising or moving your body in ways that you really enjoy because it feels good in your body, and maybe it helps with even mental health. I have really been able to connect to this idea that when I exercise I'm happier just naturally without any work. And I remember decades ago hearing people who were like, "Well, I'm just mean if I don't run five miles." And being like, God, what I would give to be someone who had that motivation or whatever.

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But now I kind of get that, it's like when you're really connected in your body and you feel alive, I always say human bodies are meant to move. We were designed to move. We're not designed to sit in a corner all day long. And we get to experience the fullness of the human experience more when we just stop saying, "Well, if my body were like this or once it's like that then I can go do these things, then I can go live this life I want.

Krista: Yeah. Or I should do these things as opposed to what does my body want me to do? What is my body asking from me? I have to tell you, I was on my Peloton the other day and I was thinking of you because you were the first person who told me about Peloton. And you're like, "It's so fun, you should go and you should try it." And I think I resisted that idea for several years and then finally during COVID I got one. And it is so much fun. I genuinely have fun on a bike.

Who would have ever thought? I would have never thought that. But I think I was still in that should place at that time.

Katrina: Right. It's like if you're having fun then you're not working hard enough. If you basically aren't like a bunch of puke because you've worked so hard then it obviously wasn't worth it. You might as well just have done nothing. That was what it was like in my head. And then I was just like, "Wait." This could be something where it's, I mean almost like a spiritual experience with your body in the sense that you're moving your body and connected to your body and hearing this amazing music.

And depending on the instructor, getting really inspirational information and you come off and think, I am amazing, how was this a bad thing?

Krista: Yeah, I would never guess.

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Katrina: And when you're doing that, not because you're trying to lose five pounds but doing it just because it's a great thing to do for yourself. It's just a completely different experience.

Krista: Yeah. Doing it because your body is asking you to do it. You have asked your body what it needs and it is telling you, yeah, I can't tell you how many times I've gotten off Peloton, or been in tears while on it, in a good way because I'm feeling really connected to myself, or something the instructor says. And yeah, anyway, so good. Well, what did we miss? What did you want to talk about that maybe we missed, Katrina?

Katrina: Well, I think that the one thing I just want to mention is my book is called *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time*. And I just want to say that in my mind I think of that as having too meanings. If you want to lose weight and keep it off permanently, for sure there's great stuff in that book. It's going to help you with that. And I do just want to mention that the other way to lose weight for the last time is to stop trying to lose weight. And so, there's a lot of other stuff in there about things that would really benefit you.

You can just not have the goal at all to lose weight but learning how to actually process your emotions, learning how to work with your body, to eat food that actually nourishes it and makes you feel good, and not using food to punish yourself, or to beat your body up. You may actually lose some weight just by doing that unintentionally. And who cares, if that's not our goal that doesn't necessarily mean it's good, or bad, or whatever.

But everybody deserves to feel that peace and freedom around food, to feel connected to themselves, to their bodies, to really become experts in their own body. Like you were saying, what does my body need today? Do I need a workout that's really intense and high energy? Or do I need something that's a lot more loving, and lower key, and whatever. Rather than going, "This is what the plan said." Instead going, "You know what, I

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think if I check-in I actually will know. I'll know what to eat. I'll know how to move my body, I'll know." You know what I mean?

More sleep tonight, or I don't. That connection is something that is going to be beneficial to everybody no matter what their goals are.

Krista: I love it. I love it. I've been thinking about it kind of like a homecoming where it's like we come home to the experience we were meant to have in our bodies.

Katrina: Right. If you think about it, probably the experience that humans had for a really long time before whatever we want to say, whether it's patriarchal societal messages or whatever. The messages are that trickle down to us on what's okay and what's not okay. And instead, just being us, which is so freeing.

Krista: Amazing. Okay, so How to Lose Weight for the Last Time, Katrina Ubell, I will link to it in the show notes. Thanks so much for coming on. If people want to get in touch with you, what's the best way, do you have a particular social outlet you like?

Katrina: We are on, we're just starting on TikTok. We're on Instagram, Facebook. And then my podcast is a great way to just keep up with what's going on for me which is called Weight Loss for Busy Physicians. I have a lot of people who listen who are not busy physicians. But they are humans and apparently other humans get a lot out of listening to me talk to busy physicians.

Krista: Apparently. I'll send some humans your way, Katrina. Thank you so much for coming on, I love you.

Katrina: Yeah, absolutely, I love you too. Thank you so much, Krista.

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Krista: Alright, take care.

Katrina: You too.

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Please don't settle for a new normal that's less than you deserve. Go to coachingwithkrista.com and click work with me for details and the next steps. I can't wait to meet you.