

Ep #42: A New Way to Approach Permanent Weight Loss with Dr. Katrina Ubell



Full Episode Transcript

With Your Host

Kristi Angevine

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Welcome to Episode #42. This is your host, Kristi Angevine. In this episode, I interview a mentor and a source of huge inspiration for me, Dr. Katrina Ubell. Katrina is the first physician turned life coach that I ever encountered when I first learned about coaching.

She trained as a pediatrician, and is a Master Certified Life and Weight Loss coach who's just released a book, *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time: Brain-Based Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss*.

In our conversation, we talk about the habits that are involved in going after really big goals. She shares a little bit about what surfaced for her when she was writing her book. And, we talked about how common it is to be disconnected from our body and why.

And as a fun perk, I'm doing a drawing so that one lucky listener can receive a free copy of her book. I'm going to repeat the details for how to enter the drawing at the end of the podcast. But if you want a head's up now, in order to enter to get a free copy of her book, there are two ways to do it.

Number one, go on to Facebook and join the Habits on Purpose Facebook group. In there, you will see a thread where you can just simply place a reply that says you're interested. The second way is you just go to the show notes for this podcast, and you'll see where you can enter your email address. The show notes are at HabitsOnPurpose.com/podcast, and then click on Episode 42. I can't wait for you to hear our conversation. So, let's dive right in.

Welcome to *Habits On Purpose*, a podcast for high-achieving women who want to create lifelong habits that give more than they take. You'll get practical strategies for mindset shifts that will help you finally understand the root causes of why you think, feel, and act as you do. And now, here's your host physician and Master Certified Life Coach Kristi Angevine.

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Kristi Angevine: Dr. Katrina Ubell, welcome to the podcast.

Katrina Ubell: I'm so glad to be here. Thanks so much for having me.

Kristi: I know many of my listeners are intimately familiar with you because their gateway into all things mindset and coaching, has oftentimes been your podcast. But for the people who don't know who you are, can you share a little bit about who you are and where you are in the world, today?

Katrina: Yeah, well, so I'm in lovely Milwaukee, Wisconsin. Which, as we were just discussing before we started recording, is much nicer than a lot of people think. But we'll just keep that a secret between us. Don't tell anybody. So yeah, so I'm a physician. I worked as a general pediatrician in a busy private practice for over 10 years. And now, I'm a Master Certified Life and Weight Loss coach who helps women physicians, who want to lose weight permanently.

How this all happened; I never had an entrepreneurial bone in my body. I never, ever, ever thought I would have a business, nor any desire. But I had a problem, and I could not figure out how to solve it. And, that was struggling with my weight. So, this started really becoming a real issue for me in medical school.

And, it just continued and continued. I just gained and lost, and gained and lost, and gained and lost. And it was really, as I was approaching my 40th birthday, that I was having sort of whole life reevaluation. And, this was just definitely an area of my life that was not making any sense.

I'd had my last baby. I had lost that baby weight. Really pinky swore, with myself; I mean it, I'm not gonna gain this weight back. And then, I promptly gained it back. I was just like; what is happening? But also, I think that logical part of my brain was like; if you think about this, from a physiological standpoint?

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Because everything seemed to be so complicated. You have to drink these gross tasting shakes, or fit your food into certain boxes, and weighing and measuring, like, all this stuff. I was just like, but really, physiologically, that's the only way. That's what's required to be able to maintain a normal weight. It just didn't make sense to me.

So, I wasn't ready to just go; okay, I guess most people just gain weight as they get older, and I just need to accept that. I think that that really can be a solution for people. But for me, I just knew deep down, there's something missing, and I don't know what it is. And so, I tried a whole bunch of other things, that led me down the path of figuring out that I actually was an emotional eater.

I think, as doctors, we're so often shut down from our emotions. And even just my upbringing, we were not an emotional family. We didn't talk about emotions; that was not a thing. I had a very judgmental kind of mental image of an emotional eater; a very sad, pathetic woman, huddled in the corner, on the floor sobbing into her bag of potato chips. I don't know, that was always my vision; very, very judgmental.

I was like; no, that's not me at all. I just like food. This is my hobby. This is what I like to do. And then I realized, no. Actually, emotional eating is eating when you're not physically hungry. And I was like; oh, well, if that's what it is, yeah, sign me up. I do that all the time. Of course, I do that.

So, then I'm alright, so now I'm an emotional eater, except I still don't know what I feel. And, I don't know what to do about it. That led me on a path of finding life coaching. And that's when I was just kind of like; I don't really know what this is, but they talk about emotions, and how we don't want to feel them. And, it seems like this could be something.

Because I also didn't really think I needed therapy, but what else can you do? And so, that sort of set me on this course of life coaching. It made such

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a big difference for me. I really had thought there might be some other female doctors out there who need help with this, too. Because I really just thought I was the only one struggling, right, no one has it. We always think no one has it as bad as us; we're the special snowflake, right?

It's my schedule; I really just thought the unpredictability in my life was the problem. And I'm literally in my head thinking there might be 5-10 other physicians who might want some help with this, out in the world. That was literally the scale and scope, I was thinking. And then, it just turned into this bigger thing. Where it was really like; people are desperately needing help. So, my business was born. I've been doing that for the last, almost seven years.

Kristi: I just love how you described your journey. I think one of the things that I would love for this episode to do, is to help normalize the struggles that oftentimes are sort of in the background, that we keep hidden from others. And empower people to realize that there might be a missing piece. There might be a different way to approach your permanent weight loss or whatever habit you're struggling with.

And so, I love how you very much highlighted that sometimes there's a disconnection with our body, disconnection with our emotions, that's the root cause of whatever we're going through. When on the surface, it's our desire to lose weight, or desire...

Katrina: Yeah, we're just , I just need to lose 10 pounds, or more than that, or whatever. If I can just get my eating under control, that's going to be the thing that's going to solve all the problems. And it's like; no, we solve the other problems, and that's what gets our eating under control.

I just want to say, it was not an easy process for me. I think it makes sense for doctors that you need to be able to be professional, that you need to be able to stuff your emotions down, at times. I've worked with people who

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practice obstetrics, who are , you can't imagine how hard it is to have a patient in one room, who just is delivering a stillborn baby, and how devastated you are, and how sad you are. And then, right next door, is a family about to deliver a normal, healthy baby.

And you need to clean your face up and put on a smile to go into the next room. And just act nothing else is going on, and be really chipper and supportive and cheery. That is emotionally taxing. That is taxing on us. But we need to be able to be professional and do that.

Okay, fine. But then what do we do after the fact? We've stuffed it down, but we keep thinking, oh, it's just gone away. It hasn't gone away; it's still waiting for us. We all have our different coping strategies on how we keep it stuffed.

So, for me, it was eating, occasionally alcohol; alcohol was never really my thing too much. But for a lot of people, it is alcohol, or it's shopping, or just numbing out in some other way, disengaging from relationships. Whatever it is, that is our thing. That is our coping strategy.

That doesn't give us what we want, right? Because it's okay to cope as long as the end result is something you're happy with. It was really eye opening for me to go; oh, okay, so, even way back, all these things that I haven't processed, they're still with me.

So, I had literally hired a therapist to teach me how to cry. I was like; I feel it probably would help me, but I cannot get it to happen. You know what I mean? How do you get the tears to come? It was such a process to learn this. I know it kind of sounds crazy, but there are a lot of people that are like; oh, no, I hear what you're saying. I just feel like I just can't do whatever it is that could really be beneficial.

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The good news is you can learn how to do that. And that's, of course, part of what I help my clients with now, and reconnecting with our bodies. I mean, what do we do through our whole training? It doesn't matter that you gotta pee, doesn't matter that you're hungry, it doesn't matter that you're dying of thirst, or so tired it hurts. You have to do this other thing and power through.

Well, then our poor bodies are just , hmm, well, I guess you're never, ever gonna pay attention to me. Some people then end up having chronic pain, which I actually did. Or, just other issues where we're , we hate our bodies. Our bodies are annoying.

But the messages from the body are the key. We have to know and work with our bodies. Do you actually need food? How do you're physically hungry? Your head, your brain cannot tell you that. Your body tells you that. How do you know when you've had enough to eat? Your body tells you that. That's a whole process of reconnection.

Kristi: A whole process of reconnection, and that really kind of emphasizes the one of the things that I teach. That our habits are learned solutions. They are advantageous, totally resourceful. They make beautiful sense when you've got a stillbirth in one room, the hemorrhage in the other, and the beautiful baby, that's uneventful, in the other. Wonderful to compartmentalize, disconnect from your body, don't process emotions in a way that you... Maybe don't know how.

And you learn it. And then, when that habit seeps out everywhere in the rest of your life, or you start realizing, oh there's an underbelly to that habituated way that I show up for myself, for my body, etc. It basically just wears out its welcome. Even though at one point in time, it was really, really useful.

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So, I think that was the perfect part, for the listeners who instantly hear weight loss, or food, or connection with their body, and they're , no, not me. I want to point out that you can insert any goal you have. When we say weight loss, or we say drinking or eating, you can insert any goal. Any habit, copy/paste that into what we're talking about.

Because it brings to mind when I was talking to Rachel Hart, she does a lot of coaching and helping people sort of transform their relationship with alcohol. And when it comes down to it, it's not actually ever about the alcohol or the food, or the exercise, it's not about the stuff. It's about whatever's going on in the background.

Katrina: Exactly. I totally agree with you on the habits. It's even , as children we set up... , there's habitual ways that we show up in relationships; how we interact with people, and how we interact with ourselves. Many of those things were developed at an early age. Where it was so smart, it was adaptive; it's how you made it through in one piece.

Or, maybe more than that, being really, really successful. And maybe now, it's maladaptive. Or, what came to mind, was people... I wish I knew who to actually quote on this, but the idea that a strength overused becomes a weakness. So, the strength of being able to stuff it is amazing, right? But now, we're overusing it, and it's actually creating problems.

So, we can still keep that strength. We don't have to be a blubbering mess and unable to control our emotions, , in the workplace. But can we figure out a way to do it when we need to? And then, not do it when we don't need to? And I mean, I can think of so many examples.

I think of, there's many women that I coach who are struggling in their marriages, because they're showing up in their marriage the way they do at work, which is giving everybody orders, expecting them to follow them, a very hierarchical directive kind of interaction. Well, maybe that works great

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at work, but personal relationships are different. And, people don't usually like being treated that way. Right?

So, it's again, so great for you in this environment, but now, it's a problem over here. And, how do you change that?

Kristi: I know that you go really in depth with your clients, with that. And another place that I think you so nicely expanded on this, is you just wrote a book. I mean, you wrote a book a while ago, but now the book is available for the rest of us. It's called, *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time*. And it's brain-based solutions... Tell me if I get this wrong, *Brain-Based Solutions for Permanent Weight Loss*.

I think it's so great, because to me, it includes what I would consider the missing pieces for weight loss. The stuff that it's not just about the food, it's not just about, how do push down my hunger and ignore that it's there? How do I eat just the right things? It's about all the actual root causes. And all the, in my mind, all the more hidden habits that are behind how we use food, how we think about our bodies, things that.

So, congratulations on doing your first book. I know it's going to be super valuable to so many people. I have a question for you, that relates to sort of the intersection of the habits involved in permanent weight loss, and the habits involved with going for any big goal, writing a book.

Katrina: It's literally the exact same thing.

Kristi: I think these could be two totally separate paths, but I think where you and I are, they overlap so much. I'm curious, when you were setting out to write this book, were there particular habits that surfaced for you? That you had to work on and change, in order to get the book done?

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Katrina: Oh, my gosh, so many, so many. First of all, I mean, the habit of sort of procrastinating or, , putting it off, putting it off, putting it off. And then, at the end, sort of anxious energy writing or editing, and then approaching it as, well, this is good enough, this is good enough. Instead of actually doing the hard thing. Being willing to be in the discomfort of, I've got to figure out how to write this every single day.

Actually, when I actually worked through this, is when I had COVID, strangely. So, I got COVID, and I had the Delta variants, so I lost my smell and taste. I felt, I mean, not to say... A lot of people feel bad with Omicron, too, but it was not fun, let's just say.

But my manuscript was due. And I thought, there's no way I'm gonna get this thing done because I feel so bad. I was in bed for five days, isolating for my family and stuff. And then, towards the end of my isolation, I was starting to feel well enough that I could work a little bit.

And so, I was able to go up into my office, and I would give myself just a time. I think it was like four hours; is what I told myself. Was, this is the max. At the end, you're going to stop, no matter what. And maybe you'll to meet your deadline, and maybe you won't. Regardless, you have a good excuse because you have COVID. But you are well enough that you can work on this.

By creating that sort of container for myself, and not pressuring myself, I was doing some of the best writing that I felt like I had done throughout the whole process. That was really, really interesting, right? I would have had every excuse in the world to just say, look, I've got COVID, I don't feel well. I want to watch shows in my bed, and I'm just not gonna get it in.

What if I just, every day, truck along a little bit. If I feel too bad, I'll stop early. But I didn't, and I was able to just keep moving on with that. And that was such a good example for myself, evidence for myself, that I can

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actually do that. And arguably, the work product, the end result, is of better quality than when you put it off, put it off, put it off, put it off. And then, in a flurry of activity try to get that chapter done.

Or, this is good enough. Instead of really thinking, what do I want this to be? I was so pleased because I did get it in. I was able to turn it in by the deadline. I was just so much more proud of the book because I had put that thoughtful... I mean, I'd obviously been thoughtful throughout the whole process. But, really, at the end of it, I remember thinking to myself; this is just a really good representation of what I stand for. I don't know, I can't be in control of how other people receive it.

One of my biggest fears in writing the book, was that somehow, I would be convinced to make the book something that wasn't what I wanted it to be, or something that I wasn't proud of, or had some sort of messaging from the publisher or whatever that wasn't in alignment. That somehow, they would sort of convince me or try to force me to do something. There was no evidence that this would happen. This was all just worries in my head.

But at the end of it, being able to go; you know what? I really stand by this, and I'm really proud of this. Was such a great feeling to just go; I was able to create what I wanted. And it was because I was able to just get myself in front of the computer, and just keep marching through it, marching through it.

Kristi: One of the things that is just really fascinating about the way you phrased all this, is you basically shared the obstacles that you ran up against. Like, the tendency to procrastinate, maybe making excuses, in a time where, let's just be honest, when you felt awful. Nobody would fault you for giving yourself grace, and maybe just putting things off in a very deliberate fashion, in a strategic fashion.

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But it sounds like, in that container, what you did was very different. And if we peel back the curtain, one more layer, we're like; okay, so these are the things that you did: You set a timer. You said, "Okay, I'm just gonna keep going. I'm gonna maybe notice if my mind starts wandering to, aww, screw it, I'll just do this."

So, if those are the things that you did, what do you think had to change in how you were thinking about the work to create that?

Katrina: Well, I remember going from; I'm never gonna get this in on time. That was my thought on repeat, there. To there's a possibility that I could get this done. But it didn't feel like a forced; you have to get it done. It was I'm open to the possibility that I could get this done. And then, I was able to look at; well, what could that look like?

Well, maybe... I remember, the first day I went up and I was like; okay, let me see how I'm feeling. If I do 20 minutes and I feel terrible, then I'll just stop. But I didn't. And I felt... You know what it was? There was space. No one else was expecting me to do anything. I couldn't go anywhere else. That's really all it was.

And then, it was kind of like; okay, well, I know, I've got this deadline. It's not like I have all day to sit here and waste time. It's a possibility I could get it done, but what's going to be required is for me to keep showing up. Knowing that it's going to have an endpoint, really pretty soon. And then, just getting connected to the message, I think, is really what it was.

At this point it was a lot of refining. But I did find myself rewriting a lot. Going like; that, nope. That's not how I want to say it. And so, I just got rid of a bunch and just rewrote the whole thing. It felt like it was just flowing out of me, I think because I created that space.

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What I have to say is a harder thing for me, just historically, is I haven't really taken on huge projects. But even back in the day when we had to do a 20-page research paper, I always hated that. It felt so big. Five to seven pages, totally, right? But the arc felt so big.

What am I actually saying? What is this whole thing? What is the point of all this? And a book is that, on steroids, right? It's just so much, does this even make any sense? And so, it's very easy then, to avoid. But once you start seeing it coming together, you're like; oh, no, okay, now we got to smooth out those rough edges, and go from there. But I think it really was just like; no, you can maybe do this. And also, if you can't, that's okay.

Just taking away that pressure; which I think so many of us do, right? So much pressure on ourselves. We don't want to do it, but we should do it. The fact that we're not doing it, we're totally judging ourselves. And, you know, mean, and exasperated, and then maybe blaming other outside things. Like well, if I didn't have to pick my kids up at three, then I'd have more time. Some people have 40 hours a week to work on this. And I know...

All those thoughts that we have. It's almost like I'm defending myself against myself, right? I have some thoughts, one part of me is like; get to work. And the other part's like; look, I'm a real human being. No.

Kristi: I think what we feel, when there's that conflict between the part of us that wants to sort of abdicate responsibility, the part of us that creates the pressure of this must be done, but it's never gonna get done. And then, when you have that, and you feel just that sort of confluence of multiple emotions, that conflict with one another, it can feel like there's no space. Like, I feel all these icky things, and...

Katrina: Either way, you feel bad, right? No matter what, you're losing. And you're in trouble, in some way. I think the thing with habits, one thing that

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I... I mean, obviously, everybody has habits. There are things that we do just on repeat, like brush my teeth every day. I mean, there's just things that I do, because that's just what we do.

But I also think that we have to be careful with ourselves, with habits. Because I think that, especially for women, especially high achieving women, it can definitely get into this perfectionistic, or punitive kind of a thing.

Like I have this whole list of how my morning routine should be, and I'm trying to make these all habits. I want them to just be this habit of what I do. Except then, we had a kid sick overnight, or we just didn't sleep that well, or whatever it is. And that's probably not actually the best thing for us to get up early, to do that.

And then, when we don't do it, then we're like; look at me, I'm terrible at this stuff. I'll never make this a habit. I can't be consistent. I'm lazy..., whatever it is; all the terrible thoughts that we think about ourselves. So, I like to hold habits loosely. In the sense, if you can think of that sort of like visual.

Where it's like; yeah, I want that to be something that I'm moving toward. And I know that the more I practice it, it will become more automatic. If I don't do it, I'll notice that I'm missing it. But at the same time, I'm not going to beat myself up along the process. Thinking that that's going to be the way to be able to do the thing consistently.

And, what does consistent even mean? Do we really have to do it every day? I mean, when it comes to brushing my teeth, I mean, I think it's probably a good idea to do that, right? But there are other things, like maybe meditating three times a week is amazing. And also, habits, even the concept of habits, is a thought, right?

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So, often we think that it's a habit only if we do it every day, or every day at the same time, or in the same way. I mean, does it? We get to figure out how to use habits in a way that works for us. We don't want to be using habits against ourselves, or in spite of ourselves, or to our own detriment.

Kristi: One of the things that I see, that's so tremendously common, and you touched on this with high achieving, very highly sensitive, highly thoughtful, just really caring human beings; men, women, whatever. Is that it's actually a habit to have that sort of rigidity, and perfectionism. That's your sort of thought pattern habit.

What can result is this habit to self-rebuke, and habit of self-criticism on the back end, when you can't meet these unrealistic expectations for yourself. Based on definitions that might not serve you. Like consistency means every single day, same way, every time, no matter what happened last night.

I love that phrase, "Holding habits loosely." To me, that really taps into that idea of when we can be really warm and compassionate, and sort of just curious about our habits, and be like; oh. Like what you said earlier, "I'm never gonna get this done, versus, it's possible I could get this done. And, I wonder what that might look like? I wonder why I might be leaning towards judging myself for not doing this? Okay. Hmm." That's a totally different energy to bring to our habits. Right?

Katrina: Totally. Absolutely. I see it again, like; I know I should be journaling every day. And I'm trying, but there's definitely days I just can't do it. And I'm like; amazing, cool, this is not a problem. It's okay. I like to think of it... Because there's so many habits that support us with keeping our eating in check, too.

Which I just want to point out, that when we're beating yourself up over habits, or not maintaining them or whatever, then we feel bad about

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ourselves. But we don't want to feel bad about ourselves. So, for the people I serve, what do we do? We eat, so we don't have to feel that way.

Other people have other ways of making sure that they can avoid feeling that. But it's usually not going to be something that is super supportive. So, when we are focusing on all this stuff about; oh, why do I like chocolate so much? That's not the right question to be asking.

But what we really need is we want to feel good; we want to feel cared for. Often, I think the habits around self-care are something that we get a bit too perfectionistic about, or too rigid about. I like to think of it as having a whole tool belt.

There's so many different things that I can do to support myself, and so, I can make the habit, "The habit is checking in with myself daily to find out, what are my actual needs? And how can I meet those needs today? And then, maybe, today, it's going to be journaling. Tomorrow, it's going to be taking a bath." Because I do this sometimes, put on a recording of the Tibetan singing bowls, and just lay in the bath, and just feel like my brain is offline, just a break from life, right?

Maybe, it's that. Maybe, it's going out for a walk. Maybe, it's going out for a run and getting a good sweat on, or whatever it is. So, the habit is not the actual thing that you're doing. The habit is checking in with yourself to find out what you need. So, you can meet that need. And not telling yourself; well, whether you need it or not, you're doing this today.

Kristi: Yeah, so we need to pause right there, and say, please listen to what Katrina just said: The habit is not the thing that you're gonna go do. The habit is pausing and checking in. I think that really gets back to that idea of when we are so perpetually, or habitually, disconnected from... You know if we're like a head without a body. For good reasons, that have worked

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really well over the years. Or, for reasons related to trauma, or to training, or to all the things.

When we can learn that skill of checking in, then all the downstream habits, they are so much easier to be intentional with. Can you... Let's talk a little bit about this tendency to compartmentalize and be disconnected from our bodies. Either, what do you see in your clients? That is sort of a theme. Or, when you're writing your book, did you notice any of that sort of tendency come up for you?

Katrina: Well, for sure, what I see with my clients, is that it is really truly a habit. Very often, even as a child, the way they got positive attention, validation, love essentially, was for what they could do with their brains. Occasionally, there's someone who was also a super high achieving athlete or something. But for the people I serve, usually not.

What they figured out was; the way I get my needs filled from the adults around me who are important, is to get good grades, to succeed, to accomplish things, to get awards, put myself out there from... it was kind of like, I was just talking to someone the other day.

I was like; well, if my children, I don't know, that it's gonna be their bodies that creates success for them in their lives. I think it's gonna be their brains. They're not of any kind of athletic caliber where that's gonna be their ticket in life. I mean, their brains are gonna be their ticket.

And so, for those of us that that's the case, our brains are our ticket in life, it makes sense that we would prioritize that, right? So, we would be focusing more on what can we do with our intelligence. And, I don't think that medicine is actually unique in this.

I mean, you just talk to anybody in law. I mean, it's literally the exact same thing. It's like, you need to work a gazillion hours, to your own detriment, for

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sure. And whatever's happening with your body is of no relevance, right now. Whatever the message is, you need to just overcome it. And I think there's so many other fields where it's the same thing, as well.

I think, again, it all makes sense. Of course, we would do that. I've had clients say that they were the smart one, right? Their sister was the pretty one, right? Or, their brother was the athletic one, and they were the smart one. Well, so if you're the smart one, that's now your identity. And so, you're going to take actions that are going to support this identity, which is, dissociating from your body, and focusing on what your brain can do for you.

And then, in medicine, of course, right? What you're valued for is your intelligence, your ability to problem-solve, your ability to push through and do that work, kind of despite everything else that's going on around you; being able to think quickly, on your feet, that's just what's valued. So, if that's how you've been trained to think about yourself and to show up in the world, then, of course, you're going to have your body way last on the list; if it's even on the list.

I mean, I remember just being like; what do you mean my body? Kind of just very confused about what that could even be. I think for people who have also struggled with their weight, their body is a source of discontent or discomfort. People have chronic pain, right? Being in my body is uncomfortable, why would I want to spend more time in there? It's just easier to ignore my body and live up in my head.

So, I think that it just becomes this pattern of how we function in the world. And to a large degree, for many of us, it's really served us well in certain areas. And then, we start realizing again, the strength overused becomes the weakness. So, here we are now, completely disconnected from our bodies.

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Recognizing that when we do a weight loss plan that forces us to eat food that doesn't taste good to us, to be super hungry all the time, to not feel we're getting our physical needs met, it only further perpetuates the fact that our bodies are used to not getting their needs met. That just further perpetuates that disconnection.

So really, all in all, awareness is so helpful, right? Because again, we all think; I've done something wrong. Something's wrong with me. Instead going; oh, wait a minute. Yeah, okay. Sure, I see. Yes, I did that. And then, this happened. And then, all of that. And then, here we are now. Right? Okay.

We can look at that with curiosity instead of judging ourselves, or at least, work on releasing that judgment. And then, start learning what would it be like to be in your body. I know, for myself, what I learned, it's still never ceases to surprise me how you can have a quite uncomfortable emotion, you go find it in your body, spend some time, not judging it or thinking about it, but really just experiencing it and being there with it. And how quickly it will go away. The number of times I ate, because I needed that to go away, but also, if I just take three minutes to be with myself, it just goes away. And then, I don't even want to eat anyway. It's really fascinating.

So, the work is the same for everybody. The question is, what is your coping strategy? What do you use? And for some people, like we said, it's food or alcohol. For other people, it's other things. For some people, it's over exercising, overworking. I mean, yelling at your kids. There are so many different things that we do to cope, right?

The work is the same for all of us; that reconnection to ourselves, understanding what our bodies need, what our brains need, and working to really take excellent care of ourselves. In the way that we probably wish we were cared for, even when we were younger. Really being seen, and

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noticed, and understood. We now have the opportunity to offer that to ourselves as adults.

Kristi: For the people who are listening, and they're hearing all these pearls of; oh my gosh. These are like hope merchant possibilities of; oh, wow, I could maybe address my habits in a different way. Can you share, maybe something that would be something tangible somebody could try this week, that might help them if they haven't yet developed those skills?

And those skills might seem a little bit like; really? I have no idea what you're talking about, feeling my feelings, being in touch with my body, being gentle to myself. I hear what you're saying, intellectually I got you. But yeah. Can you think of something that might be... I have something in mind too, if you don't, but something somebody listening to you could just do this week?

Katrina: Yeah, well, so what I think is the easiest... well, it can be very easy. It's the first thing that I did. I started doing this and I literally lost 10 pounds; first 10 pounds lost, just doing this one thing. Because we often think it's so complicated, there's so much we need to do. I didn't change my eating, what I was eating; I didn't change any of that. But I was familiar with the concept of what physical hunger felt like. I could remember it, even though I ate a lot of times when I didn't feel physical hunger.

But I just decided; I'm only going to eat if I'm feeling physical hunger. That's just my agreement with myself. I'm gonna see what happens. Again, I also didn't go into it going; and then, this many pounds need to come off. I didn't tack any kind of result that I was counting on, or I would only know if it was working if I lost that certain amount of weight.

I just thought; this seems like it would be something that makes sense to do. Let me just see what happens if I do this. What could my experience be

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if I try this? So, I thought; okay, if I'm not hungry, I won't eat. But if I am hungry, I will let myself eat.

And, this is important, because through so much of my dating years, there was so much fear around being hungry, right? You've already eaten, what you're "allowed" to eat for the day. And so, there's so much fear that; what happens if at nighttime, I'm hungry? Or, there's no points left? Or, whatever I'm supposed to do.

So, I would overeat to try to prevent future hunger, later. This is very, very different, right? It's like I'm promising myself; if I'm physically hungry, whenever, it doesn't matter, the minute I wake up to right before I go to bed, I will meet my body's needs by eating something. Whatever seems it'd be supportive at that time. And if I'm not physically hungry, I won't eat.

I literally, I mean, it was shocking to me how simple that was. And also, it required me to connect to my body. Right? Like well, I'm thinking about eating this food. Let me check in really quick. Am I experiencing any physical hunger?

It was kind of a fun novelty in the beginning. Where I was like; oh, yeah, you know what? I probably don't need to eat that. And even if it's something that I want to eat, I could just save it for later when I am physically hungry.

And a nice little p.s. to that, you know what you find out? Is that when you're feeling physical hunger and you eat, food tastes so much better. Even supportive, nutritious food tastes really good when you're actually hungry. So, when you're used to eating when you're not hungry, and then you're like; oh, I don't really want that, whatever, the vegetables or whatever it is. Yeah, when you're hungry though, it tastes pretty darn good.

It's a simple thing to just get familiar with; how do I know if my body's asking for food? What does that actually feel like? And then, the next step

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after that, is the flip side of that; how do I know when my body has had enough? And, what could those feelings be like for me?

And when we're not judging ourselves, and just getting really, really curious, we can start to notice; you know what? I ate till I felt like this. But then, 30 minutes later, I really felt like it was too much. Okay, interesting. Let me try slowing down and see what happens as I eat. Let me try stopping when the feeling is different. When I've had less food, and seeing what happens.

I trained myself, inadvertently, talk about habits, to completely overeat at dinner again. With Weight Watchers, which I had done so many times, vegetables are free. I was afraid I wouldn't be able to eat later if I was hungry, so I taught myself to overeat. Which meant that I thought that you needed to be, basically, feeling overly full, super distended. And that was the signal of when you should stop eating.

It was it was all fear based. So, I had to, essentially, relearn; no because guess what? If you're hungry later, you can still eat. So, you don't need to stuff yourself so much. And then, just recalibrating all of it. What I like to remember, at least, is except for some very rare exceptions, all of us were born with this knowledge innate.

Babies know when to eat, and they know when to stop eating. They just do, right? They know that. And so, somewhere along the line, we had that beat out, so to speak, right? Many of us, when we were kids, being forced to eat when we weren't hungry, because parents decided you need more food than that; or you're too skinny, or clean-plate club, you've got to finish everything on your plate, whether you want it or not.

There's so many different things that are well meaning; the intentions are good. But it disconnects us from what those signals are. So, I think it's kind of cool, especially just being a doctor and a fan of the human body, to just

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go; oh my God, my body is so awesome. It already knows what I need. I don't need a food scale. I don't need boxes. I don't need powders that I have to mix with stuff.

That is not the answer. You chew up food that tastes good to you, and gives your body some nutrition. And you eat it when your body's asking for food, and you stop when it's had enough. This is what I was talking about, it doesn't need to be so complicated. If you just start doing these things, your body will respond. It's just how it works.

Kristi: So, I love that you gave something so practical and tangible. I think this, even for people who may not have anything that feels like a tricky relationship with their body or food, I feel like this is actually such a great portal to getting in touch with your body; by using hunger there. Even if you have the most beautiful relationship with food in your body. I think this is really good.

Katrina: And it's good to just remind ourselves; oh, look at me eating when I'm hungry. I do such a good job of taking care of my body.

Kristi: And talk about a beautiful reminder of that innate wisdom that we were born with. This is just a sort of an unlearning of things that might not serve us, and remembering of how things were before they were sort of "beat out of us", like you phrased it. I think the overarching theme to this, is doing this work requires or calls on us to put on our little researcher jacket, or our grad student hat and our clipboard. And be like; okay, what happens when I do this? And to be experimental and open.

When we're experimental and open, and just fascinated by what's going on, it makes it easier to not let the critic kind of take over and be like; well, you should have this figured out by now. Look at you eating too much; all that. If you just make space for that part not to, sort of, be so active.

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So, that was beautiful. As we wrap up, I want to tell everybody that Katrina was so sweet; she is giving away a copy of her book to one lucky listener. And the details for how to do that are going to be at the very end of this podcast and in the show notes.

So, as we close up this conversation, that we could probably, let's be honest, last for 3-5 hours if we're gonna touch on all the different nuances of the work that we do. But as we wrap up, is there anything else that we didn't touch on that you wanted to, or anything else that you would like to add to this conversation?

Katrina: I think that the main thing that I just want to really impress upon people, is that if they struggle with food or weight, or... Because there are people who don't struggle with their weight, but do struggle with food, or have a complicated relationship with food. Or, they know somebody who does. Which, I mean, if you just look at statistics, you're gonna at least know somebody who does.

Just understanding the concept that this is a complex situation, that's not as simple as we've been led to believe, right? When people still say things like; well, it's just calories in, calories out. Or, it's just simple thermodynamics.

I mean, it's like: well, okay, I'm not gonna say no, right? Because if you're eating 25 Snickers™ every day, that's probably not going to work out very well for you. But there's so much more to it. I like to say, that when it comes to, not just even weight loss, but permanent weight loss. Which, to me, means solving the actual problem so that you can experience what I call peace and freedom around food.

Which means being able to be around all of your favorite foods, and just not caring that much. You could eat it and it would taste good, and that would be fine. You could also not eat it and you're completely fine. You just

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don't really care that much. An appropriate amount of caring, which is not that much.

When you understand that... It's only about 20% about food, and 80% about all the reasons you're using food. Like, why are you eating that food? I think we can just all open our minds to, this is a complex issue that requires us to get support from ourselves, but also support from people around us.

I mean, people who are on the higher end of weight are mistreated in society. And all the ways, basically. I've heard people say, well, people who are overweight, they're just unhappy in their lives. They're just miserable. And I'm like; look, all of us are unhappy in our lives. All of us are miserable. It's just that these people use food. And then, you can see the after-effects of it on their bodies.

The other people are smoking, or drinking, or whatever it is, where you can't see the effects on their bodies. To think that people who struggle with their weight are somehow different, they're not; that's just what they're using. Right? So, I think that's the bigger picture. It's just love and compassion for all of us. And understanding, that people struggle with weight; it's not just that simple.

I mean, I've had women I work with, who are doctors, who are married to doctors, and their husbands are like; you just need to eat less and go running sometimes. It's so flippant. It feels like a big F.U. to the person who's struggling, and it really builds so much shame. And so, whether it's the person who's listening is the one who's struggling today, or someone that they know, just understanding there's more to this.

But what's so cool, to your point, you work through this in whatever fashion you're struggling. And then, you realize; oh, I can use these skills and tools

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that I've developed to... Use these to end my struggle with food. Now, I can take on some other big thing in my life, or just teach it to other people.

I know so many people are like; I just want my kids to know this, so that they don't have to wait till they're 40 to learn it, or things like that. We just all have to know there's more to this.

Kristi: Yeah, absolutely. I think that knowledge helps take away some of the stress that like; you should build figure this out overnight.

Katrina: Or, on your own; you shouldn't need help.

Kristi: Exactly. Then, it shows that once we can change our relationship with ourselves, our relationship with our habits, look at all the things that we can model for our family, for our friends, for our community, for our patients. Look how we show up differently. And that's, not to wax poetic, but that's how we change the world.

It starts with us in our bodies, and then it just naturally extends out. So, for people who are listening, who really... They heard what you said, and they're like; okay, I must have more. Can you tell them what your podcast is called? What's your program called? How they can find you?

Katrina: Yes. My podcast is *Weight Loss for Busy Physicians*, available on all the podcast platforms. My website is KatrinaUbellMD.com There's a bunch of free resources there. And then, the book is available at all major booksellers, including Audible. I did actually narrate it myself. So, the book is *How to Lose Weight for the Last Time*. And currently, a bestseller; it's really pretty fun to see that.

Obviously, it can be a little bit fraught, to be recommending a book to, a weight loss book, to somebody. But as long as we do have those relationships with people... I was actually just at a workshop a couple of

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days ago, and talking to this one man. And he's like; my sister's a nurse, and she really struggles with her own weight. I'm definitely gonna tell her about this book.

So, just getting that word out... I mean, the purpose of writing the book really, for me, was, yes, I help this very narrow slice of the population. We have study data that shows that it works, and it's all amazing; but what about everybody else? So, this book really is written for the general population.

I think of it as helping the end user, the person who's struggling with her weight. But also, I really wanted there to be a resource for doctors to be able to offer to their patients who struggle with their weight. Because so many doctors are like; I don't know what to say, either. I don't know what to tell people to do. And they don't have time, even if they did know, they don't have time.

If you know a doctor, maybe letting them know; hey, there's this great resource. It can just help doctors to kind of change the narrative. There's a whole section on TikTok about all the terrible weight loss advice that people feel they've gotten from doctors. Doctors are really doing the best that they can. They have a whole lot that they've got to handle, and so, if I can take any load off of them or make anything easier for them, then, I'd love to do that, as well.

Kristi: Thank you so much for your time, and for coming on and sharing what you've been working on for many, many years; with all the listeners. It's just been so fun.

Katrina: It's been so great, Kristi. Thanks much for having me.

Kristi: Now, as I mentioned at the beginning of the podcast, one lucky listener can get a free copy of Katrina's new book by entering our drawing.

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If you want to enter, there are two ways to do it. The first way is go on to Facebook and join the Habits On Purpose Facebook group.

Once you join, you will see a post where you can simply reply that you're interested, and you will get entered into the drawing. The other way is you can go to habitsonpurpose.com/podcast and click on Episode 42. When you do so, you'll be at the show notes and you're going to see where you can click to enter your email address for the drawing.

If you want to learn more about how to better understand your habits, stop feeling reactionary, and get back into the proverbial driver's seat with your habits, you'll want to join my email list. Which you can find linked in the show notes. Or, if you go to habitsonpurpose.com, you'll find it right there.

Thanks for listening to *Habits On Purpose*. If you want more information on Kristi Angevine or the resources from the podcast, visit www.habitsonpurpose.com. Tune in next week for another episode.