

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell



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Jody Moore

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I'm Jody Moore and this is *Better Than Happy*, episode 375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell.

Did you know that you can live a life that's even better than happy? My name is Jody Moore. I'm a master certified life coach and a member of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints. And if you're willing to go with me I can show you how. Let's go.

Hey there everybody, welcome to the podcast. I have my friend, Katrina Ubell on the podcast today. She and I have known each other for a very long time and been through some really lifechanging experiences together as we've been through Master Coach Certification and built our businesses and all kinds of things. Katrina is a doctor. She had a practice as a pediatrician for many, many years which she ended up leaving in order to be a full-time life coach. How about that, you all?

She coaches doctors who want to lose weight and she's amazing. And her work has been somewhat inaccessible to those of us who are not doctors because she only takes doctors in her coaching program for various reasons. But she wrote this amazing book that's coming out. I think it's out actually. She'll tell us on the podcast. I can't remember, it's been a few weeks since we recorded.

But anyway, amazing book which I was able to get an advance copy of where she teaches all of the tools that she teaches to her physicians around how to lose weight for the last time. How to do it in a healthy sustainable way. And I'm very excited for you to learn from Dr. Ubell.

I do want to say before we dive into the conversation that the doors to Be Bold are open right now. We haven't opened it for a while because we took the summer off of onboarding and everything. And now we're ready, the doors will only be open for a little while but if you've been waiting for it, we've had lots of people ask us, "When is it going to open?" And so, it is open now until the end of September and then it will close again.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

So, head to jodymoore.com/membership if you've been wanting to join us in there. You can learn all about it. It is lifechanging. Make sure you get in there. I love you guys, here is my conversation with Dr. Ubell.

Jody: Okay, Katrina Ubell, I'm so excited. I can't believe I haven't had you on the podcast before now.

Katrina: It's kind of a dream come true, Jody, I'm so happy to be here, thank you so much.

Jody: No. But seriously because I've known you for a long time, what has it been, five years or so we've known each other?

Katrina: Yeah, probably about that long, yeah.

Jody: At least. And we went through Master Coach training together.

Katrina: Which almost killed us both.

Jody: We both have a little PTSD from that.

Katrina: We do, in the best way, if there's a good way to have PTSD.

Jody: In the best way. And I should say for people asking what that means. It's an advanced coach training at The Life Coach School. But the year that Katrina and I went through, it was an unusual year for a lot of reasons. So, she and I were the only students in Master Coach training. It was she and I working with a couple of instructors. And Master Coach training is a deep personal transformation. And so, she and I got to go through that together and watch each other go through it. And it was powerful, and awful, and great.

Katrina: It was a very bonding experience I would say.

Jody: It was, that's why I was like, "I feel so close to you even though we don't get to talk that often."

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Katrina: Well, it's like no one can ever take away that experience, you know what I mean?

Jody: That's right.

Katrina: It's just we went through something really, really deep and intense and in all the best ways. I feel like we were just broken down and then I don't know if we were built back up. I think we built ourselves back up.

Jody: Which I think is the goal now.

Katrina: It is the goal.

Jody: But we've seen each other cry a lot of tears. And anyway, okay, but Katrina Ubell is a brilliant, amazing doctor, pediatrician. How do you introduce yourself, Katrina?

Katrina: Yeah. well, I kind of think of myself now as sort of like a former pediatrician which is interesting. It's interesting how our identities kind of shift as time progresses because I feel so much more connected to the work that I do now as a life coach for doctors. If someone is really asking for just the five word thing, I'm like, "Yeah, I'm a life coach for doctors." And the way that I help them to feel better physically, emotionally, really experience the lives that they really want to lead is through weight loss.

And as you can imagine that there are lots of doctors who feel a lot of personal shame as they're giving advice to their patients that they should lose weight, or that they should be at a healthier weight for them. Knowing that on the inside they struggle themselves and they don't actually know what the answers are. It's kind of like this hollow advice that you feel like you're giving. And the reason I know about that is because that was me for a really long time.

And so maybe I wasn't giving advice to adults so much. But I was definitely talking to people about their children's eating habits and their adolescents. And very sensitive to the whole subject and not, you know, it's the thing

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

with overeating and your weight is that people can see your struggle. There's so many other things you can struggle with and the average person won't be able to tell. But when your patients see you every three months or every six months, or once a year and they don't know if they're getting 50 pounds heavier Dr. Ubell or 40 pounds lighter Dr. Ubell.

They feel permission to make comments about things and stuff. And so, it's, you know, I think it's a struggle that so many of us particularly women really have struggled with. But I think for doctors in particular there's just some added elements that make it more difficult. Now, that's who I initially intended to serve because I felt like nobody was serving me and I had such a hard time solving my own problem until I found life coaching.

But what I found over the course of time with my podcast, Weight Loss for Busy Physicians that I actually have a lot of non-physicians listening, just other busy people. And lots of doctors recommending my podcast to people of all walks of life who are listening and getting a lot of help out of what I share there. So, then I thought, you know what? I think that I probably should put this together in a book. I never was somebody who wanted to write a book. This was not a dream of mine.

But it became a dream of mine and I really did start to feel like there is a contribution that I feel called to make in this world of weight loss that can be very noisy, very confusing. Everybody's kind of sharing the latest and greatest kind of fad type of thing. We've been disappointed so many times thinking this is going to be the thing. But I really did feel like there was a different angle and there wasn't a voice to it. And also, I felt the need to somewhat legitimize life coaching as a real modality, as a real solution to struggling with overeating and not weighing what you want to weigh.

And so, my book is called How to Lose Weight for the Last Time. I kind of think of it as different angles. It could be that you want to actually lose some weight and have it be the last time. And I will share with you in the book exactly how to do that. But also, I think there is another element where you can think of it as you know what? I'm going to lose weight for the

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

last time by no longer trying to actually lose weight, by actually reconnecting to my body, by listening to its signals, honoring it, treating it well, treating myself well.

Having an inner life of thinking that is positive, and supportive, and loving. And then I can just never want to or need to lose weight again because that's no longer the focus.

Jody: I love that. One of the first questions I wanted to ask you was, we're seeing this wave of messaging that's trying to undo some of the damaging messaging we've been socialized with especially as women. Body positivity movement and a movement away from weight loss being such an important thing or a relevant thing even in our lives necessarily. What is it about helping people lose weight that you still – because I know you're a very conscious and feminist, could we call you a feminist?

Katrina: Sure, proudly.

Jody: Yeah. And so, what is it about weight loss that you still feel so connected with and called to? Why is that such a noble thing still for you to be able to help people with?

Katrina: I believe that all of that messaging, I mean I could really just only truly honestly speak for myself. But that messaging was so subtle, and insidious, and everywhere.

Jody: Thinking about bodies needing to look a certain way and all that you mean?

Katrina: Bodies needing to look a certain way but also you should be able to eat everything. You should be able to eat all the things and still be super skinny.

Jody: Remember the Carl's Jr. ad with the skinny girl on the cart eating the cheeseburger dripping. Yeah, you're supposed to be thin, and beautiful, and eating dripping cheeseburgers.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Katrina: Exactly. And that never creating a problem for you in any way. I think there's so much messaging especially for girls and women too of trying to tell us that we're too emotional. However, we are is not okay and it needs to be stifled or dampened in some way. And I think the most readily accessible way that we learn either as children, or young women, or even for plenty of people in adulthood is by using food to feel better. Because we don't feel like we have any skills on how to deal with our emotions.

We don't know what is normal. We don't know what to do. But we know that if we're eating we're not biting everyone's heads off. We're a little bit nicer if we're just going to have that cookie in the afternoon. But then at the same time we are so frustrated with ourselves because we know that we can accomplish so much. We have accomplished so much. We're amazing capable women yet we're still struggling with something that we know that we can solve for.

And I always say, my goal is not to create a whole bunch of skinny people. My goal is for people to feel peace and freedom around food. And to feel that peace and freedom with their bodies as well, whatever that looks like for each individual person. And so, we don't have to put specific limits on in order for you to be healthy it's this or that. I think it's so much more a process of taking back ownership of what kind of body do you like to live in and move in? Not because you're trying to keep up with your friend next door or all the messaging that's out there.

But because you physically feel best, you can do the things you want to do, your body is happy, you sleep well, your digestion is good. All of those things, whatever that is for you then that's what we want to create for you. And that doesn't mean that you have to be on a diet for the rest of your life or you can't ever eat food that tastes good to you. But what it does mean is that when you're struggling emotionally you're not reaching immediately for the ice-cream or the thing that's going to kind of push it down. That was the story of my life as a doctor.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

I'd have this big, long day of being kind of on, you know what I mean? Like hi guys, and the whole thing and that was great. And then I'd come home so emotionally wiped that I would just sit there in front of the TV and just eating cookies until I literally felt sick. That was the signal, maybe you should stop because I felt ill. That's not great. So, to say, "No more thinking about that, whatever you eat is okay." Well, that wasn't okay, that wasn't good for my body. I did not feel well.

And it wasn't taking care of the problem it was just year after year of me continuing to deal with my emotions in that way and being completely disconnected. So, I just continue to feel connected to this because there are so many people who need this help. And my clients, they come saying, "I just want to lose weight or I'm here for the weight loss."

And then they leave six months later or some of them continue on for a while and they're like, "I did lose some weight and that's amazing but now I can have a busy stressful call week and actually take good care of myself and I'm not diving head first into all the snacks and eating my way through the entire week", or whatever it is. Their relationships are better. They actually like being a doctor again. I don't know about you. But I don't want to be taken care of by a doctor who doesn't like being a doctor and doesn't want to be there.

So, we all win when doctors are happy and feel fulfilled, and confident, and for so many people that avenue in is through weight loss, overeating. Just getting some peace around that perpetual struggle for so many women.

Jody: So, what is it do you think, because I remember in the past hearing you talk about how some of the things you felt you were taught, and correct me if I'm getting this wrong. But some of the things you were taught in medical school and in your training that I don't know if you said that they're getting it wrong. But it's an incomplete education around weight loss and nutrition that a lot of doctors have gotten, I don't know if they're still getting it that way. What are doctors missing or getting wrong when it comes to weight loss?

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Katrina: So, I don't think it's really changed from what I hear. And there might be some outliers, so I won't say that it's everybody for sure. But the amount of time spent on learning proper nutrition is a couple of hours over the course of four years. You spend way more time learning about incredibly rare nutritional and vitamin deficiencies, things you'll never see in your career, really pretty much ever. We spend way more time studying those things than we do figuring out how to be healthy.

So, if you think about it, it's more the study of disease and disease processes rather than what makes you healthy. And so, I think the other thing just in their defense is what is 'healthy' depends on the individual, depends on so many different factors. So, to say that every human should eat this one way, I don't think is the right thing to be teaching either. I think the most important thing is for doctors to just at least become aware of their limits when they don't know what to say anymore. When they keep giving people the same advice and it's really not working.

And the way they know that is because people come back without the results. Saying, "You just need to eat less and move more." And then blaming, I'm not saying individual doctors do this but just as a whole. It's like the blame is on the patient if that advice doesn't work for them. You should just eat less and if you can't there is something wrong with you. Well, maybe that's not great advice.

Jody: Right. Because it's not rocket science to eat less and move more in general, like you said, there are specifics for every specific body. But the challenge is in getting yourself to do that. So, I feel like when a doctor tells me, "Hey, you need to lose 10 pounds, 20 pounds, 50 pounds, 100 pounds, whatever it is, you need to lose weight for the sake of your health. These indicators would all improve, these whatever vital signs would improve if you lost weight most likely."

I do think isn't possibly an oversimplification first of all of what's going on in the body. But also, to your point, easier said than done.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Katrina: Yeah. I mean the thing about it is that is really just a very educated guess to say that, “You have this health problem and if you lose weight it will help with that.” Maybe it will, probably it will depending on the situation. But a guarantee that it will help, nobody has that. Nobody can say confidently that it will do that. I also think that oftentimes that advice comes from a fear based approach.

And what I always think of is back in the day they put these warnings on cigarette packs to try to get people to smoke less. With horrible pictures of lung cancer lungs and you’re going to die, and these horrible messages. And it actually made people smoke more because they were using the cigarettes to deal with their anxiety, their fear, their emotions, their smoking.

Jody: [Crosstalk], more anxiety and you smoke more.

Katrina: Yeah, and then you smoke more, exactly.

Jody: Isn’t that fascinating?

Katrina: So, to say, “This is going to be, you know, your body is really suffering and it’s really struggling.” And whatever they’re saying, kind of this fear based approach, you really need to lose weight. Well, what does someone who deals with their fear and anxiety do who’s an overeater? They eat. In defense of the doctors, they don’t know what else to do. They don’t have the skills. They don’t have these tools. They don’t know what to tell people, which is another reason why I wrote the book.

So that maybe the people who are open to it would open their eyes to there might be something else going on. I was actually just at a workshop last week and this man who was not – doesn’t have a weight issue at all came up to me and said, “I think I might need to read your book because my wife struggles with her weight. And I think after talking to you I think I might have been really insensitive to her all these years. Because I think I probably just don’t really understand what she’s going through.”

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

And I was like, “I would guess that that’s probably the case, that she’s struggling in ways that you can’t understand.

Jody: Yeah. To someone that doesn’t have an overeating problem or isn’t an emotional eater it’s like, what, just stop eating when you’re full. I don’t understand, what’s the big deal? It’s again, having grown up in the LDS faith and never drinking alcohol. And people are like, “I don’t understand, how do you go to a wedding and not drink?” I’m like, “You just go and you don’t drink. It’s actually really easy.” But I know that when you have wired your brain to think that that’s the solution for negative emotion, or discomfort, or whatever, then we’re talking about a whole different ballgame here.

So, there’s a couple of things in your book I want to have you just speak to a little bit. This is such an amazing book, you guys, I highly recommend it. I just want to say, your title is brilliant first of all, How to Lose Weight for the Last Time. And I love your explanation even more that you just gave of that might mean, okay, let’s lose weight and then be done dieting for the rest of your life. Or it might be, let’s understand food, and your body, and make peace, and you’ve already done, at least with that focus even though you might lose weight actually accidentally when you implement these strategies.

Katrina: Unintentionally, yeah.

Jody: Yeah. So, one of the first things that you address in several of the first chapters is hunger. You talk about over-hunger, and emotional eating, and what is real hunger. I thought maybe you could just speak for a few minutes and everyone get the book and get the detailed description but could you speak to why we’ve lost touch with hunger or why is hunger such an important part? The first several chapters talk about it.

Katrina: Yeah. Well, so the first thing about hunger is that for the vast majority of us, especially for genetically normal, typical, we are born honoring our hunger signals. So, our bodies know how much to eat, and

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

when to eat, and when to stop eating innately. This is in us and we know how to do this. And at some point in our lives and it varies for each person we lost touch with that. And that could be if you were raised by people who forced you to finish your food on your plate. You were forced to eat when you were a child even when you weren't hungry.

It can be lots of different stressful things. I mean as doctors in our training it's like this is your only chance to eat. So, you stuff yourself as full as you can because you're afraid you won't be able to eat for eight hours.

Jody: Eat to keep from getting hungry.

Katrina: Yes, to prevent hunger in the future you'd better stuff yourself now. So, it can happen in various ways but we disconnect from that. Even if you just try to lose weight, so often the vast majority of weight loss programs are telling you what to eat, how much to eat, when to eat, how often to eat. All of that is basically presupposing that you don't know and they know better than you do.

Jody: And that is what they tell you.

Katrina: Right, exactly. They're like, "You obviously, that part of you is broken. So, I'll just step in and tell you when you need this." But the truth is that that part of your body is not broken. It totally knows, we just are so disconnected that we don't listen. We don't even know the signals. And the signals when we're all discombobulated and just eating everything under the sun, the hunger signals can be really extreme, that's what I call over-hunger. Where you feel like, I think of it as a wave clobbering you, like a huge tsunami wave it's pummeling you. You need to eat right now.

People talk about feeling hangry or they're going to gnaw their arm off or something like that because they're so hungry. That's not appropriate hunger. Hunger, our bodies are not designed to give us hunger in that way. It's just when we're eating in this way that isn't supportive to our bodies that hunger starts to feel that way. So, kind of I think of it as hitting the reset button so that your body starts functioning physiologically the way human

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

bodies evolved to function. That feeling of hunger is literally like a little wave in the Caribbean or in Hawaii, just slapping your ankles.

It's just a little suggestion, it's like, "Hey, now it'll be good to eat if you want to, it'll be cool." And if you don't it's also not that big of a deal.

Jody: Because you can eat the calories on your body basically?

Katrina: Yeah, exactly, you can do that. Your body just knows how to take good care of itself. And if you think about just from an evolutionary standpoint. The main cause of death for humans for the absolute vast existence of humans was starvation. So, we never had food around in a very reliable way or for most of the time we didn't have that. So, it doesn't make sense that we have to eat every three hours or it's going to harm us in some way.

That's the logical part of me when I was trying to lose weight where I was like, "This just literally doesn't make sense though. It doesn't make sense that it has to be like this." So, it makes sense that you should be able to eat and then go several hours feeling good, and energetic, and satiated before the next time it's time to eat again. The other part of hunger is understanding physical hunger from emotional hunger. This was really important for me on my personal journey. It took me a while to figure this one out.

It was one of those things I'd kind of heard of but didn't really get it for a long time. And when I finally did it made a huge difference. And the thing is, is when you start to pay attention again you start believing, you know what? I actually do know inside me when I should be eating and maybe when it's not true hunger you start figuring out the differences. So, for me regular hunger, physical hunger feels like over my stomach, my actual upper abdomen, maybe I get a little growling, maybe it feels kind of empty in that area. But that's what it feels like for me.

But emotional hunger is usually higher up, it's more in my chest. And the onset is very different. Where physical hunger kind of gradually comes on, I

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

notice I'm starting to get hungry and I'm a little hungrier, and a little hungrier. Emotional hunger is boom, I am starving. I need to eat right now and sometimes to the point of even surprising me. Where I'm like, "Wow, I'm surprised I'm so hungry all of a sudden." But I remember the first time I thought, I wonder if this is emotional though. It kind of feels pretty close to physical hunger.

Let me just see what happens if I just wait. And I promise you, I swear five minutes later it was gone, completely gone. So physical hunger isn't going to feel like that. That feels totally different. And then it went away, I felt totally great, I moved on with my day and I was like, "Oh, that is emotional hunger. I don't have to eat, I can just be with myself for five minutes to tolerate that, sure, I can do that." And at the same time ask myself, "So what's going on that's making this come up?"

Jody: Yeah, because whatever you really need actually isn't even solved by food, it's just maybe pushed down for a minute by the food. That's so good. I love too to just embrace that emotional hunger, it does feel like an emergency. I can tell you from the work that I've done and you helped me. You coached me on this when we were in Master Coach training that it feels like if I don't eat this thing I'm going to die. Even though I know I'm not going to die if I don't eat the cookie.

It feels like the part of my brain that wants that cookie. I had to acknowledge that it really thinks I'm going to die if I don't eat cookies. But it's just a misinformed part of my brain. I'm not going to die. And I'm not going to miss out on something amazing, poor me, all of that tantrum that happens in my head. But I feel like I had to give myself permission to acknowledge it instead of brush it away. I know that's ridiculous. I know I don't need it. I had to really kind of let it be there and let myself watch the tantrum before I could get any leverage over it. It's just really powerful.

Katrina: It's just the difference there that what you're describing is the way that didn't work was not really approaching yourself with the supportive loving care, self-talk that you really could have. It was kind of like, this is

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

silly, why does this keep happening? I wish this didn't happen. This is so hard, things like that versus approaching yourself with that love and concern. And acknowledging it like you said, validating it. When I feel this urge, this desire, it feels really strong and it feels like something bad is going to happen if I don't eat this.

And yeah, if that's how I'm feeling it's going to be harder to not eat it but I still can eat it. I often think of it as, you know, I know you obviously have kids and so many of your listeners do too. If our child came to us saying this we wouldn't just be like, "Well, that's ridiculous that you're hungry." We would just be like, "I hear you, but you know what? It's not time to eat right now and it's going to be okay." That's the kind of love and compassion we need to be offering to ourselves. This is hard but I know we're going to be able to get through this.

I'm going to stay with myself and be patient as I walk through this, as I take myself through this process. I'm going to feel so great when I've gotten through this and I didn't eat. Physically feel great, my body will feel better not having eaten this and I'll be so proud of myself or whatever ends up resonating. It's just understanding that our thoughts are way more powerful than we think when it comes to those really, really strong urges.

Jody: And this is reminding me too of just the body love work that's taken me years and will still be ongoing probably forever. But what I realized one day that when I do eat the junk, not because I'm hungry, not because it's fuel for my body, just emotionally. I do physically feel terrible after. And that gets worse as I've gotten older.

Katrina: Me too, I know.

Jody: I heard Nate Bargatze, comedian, one time say, "I put something in my body now, I know exactly where it is and what I ate [crosstalk] it doesn't matter." But anyway, and just not wanting to feel that way, that's for me the main motivation behind. It's okay that you're stressed, or you're frustrated or whatever. Let's just figure that out and be with that rather than eat a

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

cookie because then you're going to feel frustrated, stressed and physically ill.

Katrina: Right. Or frustrated with yourself that you ate the cookie, [crosstalk].

Jody: Yeah. So anyway, it's not easy work, I don't think but it is doable. And would you say it's just practicing it then, practice?

Katrina: I think it is definitely practicing. I mean I think so many people don't realize how bad they feel until they feel good. And I hear that a lot with my clients where they don't think there's a problem then we kind of clean things up a little and they're actually eating nourishing food that tastes good to them, that they really, really enjoy. So, it's not like it tastes bland or terrible, but it's actually nutritious. They're like, "I feel so good. I had no idea I could feel this good."

But I do think that – apparently, I mean I haven't personally had an alcohol problem but I have heard a lot of people speak about Alcoholics Anonymous and the 12 step program. And apparently one of the kind of phrases that they have is the program works if you keep working the program. And it would be very easy for someone who has alcohol addiction or any kind of addiction to just kind of be like, "Okay, well things are better and I haven't used for x many days or years, or whatever, I don't need to do this anymore." And that doesn't typically work out well.

So, I don't think of, you know, some people identify it as food addicts, most of the people I work with don't. But I really have found over the course of many years of working with my clients that the people who keep up the things that really help to support them, those tools, those are the ones that really find this is easy now, this is just how I roll. I actually check-in with myself before I eat. I check-in to figure out, is my body actually hungry? And while I'm eating I check-in, I figure out how full am I? How satisfied am I? Am I ready to stop now? And really learning what that sweet spot is.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

And then speaking to what you were saying about, you know, we were talking about approaching ourselves with love and kindness when you have that urge to eat that cookie. I have done over the last several years, well, mostly just since I guess the last maybe nine months since we were allowed to travel again I guess. But I've done some significant international travel, things that you would think of as being really, really challenging. And it's so great to go through a trip like that and not feel so hugely bloated and distended uncomfortably, burping like crazy.

Just feeling awful because you feel like, it almost ruins the great experience that you're having because this is your chance and you have to eat all these foods while you can have them. I think when you can get to that place of really supporting yourself emotionally and with your thoughts your behaviors are more in line with what you're looking for. And so, when I go on vacation, sure, I eat more things than I would typically but I don't overeat them. And I also refuse to beat myself up over it.

When I get back home it's right back to business as usual. And usually my body is so happy, it's like, thank goodness we're eating this again. Yay, it just is very much to me a sustainable way of doing this which if you do end up losing some weight that is how you keep the weight off. Not by having to count things for the rest of your life, or I mean there's medications but you have to inject those the rest of your life. There's so many things. I was a lifetime Weightwatchers member. I was like, "I am not going to count points the rest of my life. I just know this."

Yet I kept going back every time I needed to lose weight again, I'll figure out a way where I don't need to use points except I didn't know what that was. I had to just completely approach it from a different perspective.

Jody: So that kind of speaks to, you have a chapter in here about creating your unique eating plan. Can you speak a little bit to why that's so important? I mean everybody's like, "Just tell me what to eat and I'll eat it."

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Katrina: Right. Well, we all think that. We're like if a trainer just came to my house and a personal chef just cooked all my food then I wouldn't have any problems. And I think that, I'm just going to say, that's not true because first of all, the personal trainer, or sorry, the personal chef cannot make you eat the food that they have prepared. And also, they haven't taken away all your favorite foods from the gas station.

Jody: I was going to say, they're not there when you leave your house.

Katrina: They're not sitting with you at 11:00pm when you're shoveling in the Tootsie Rolls from the candy your kids don't want to eat anymore. So, we kind of assume if it's just done for me then I will follow it. And same with a trainer. I know so many people who cancel on their trainers all the time. Because they're like, "I don't want to do what they say." So, I think there's kind of typically two different kinds of ways that we approach it when someone comes at us with that, of here's the way to do it which if we would follow it, it probably would work.

I mean I'm not saying it doesn't work, it's just we don't want to follow it. The first thing is that we get all into trying to please that person, please the trainer, we do all the things. And then it gets boring and we just don't want to do it anymore. And so, then we just quit, and we just stop. So that's not helpful.

Jody: And I find when I get to that point I sort of rebel against.

Katrina: Well, and that's the second part is the rebellion. The second person says like, "Don't tell me what to do."

Jody: She can't tell me what to eat, she's stupid.

Katrina: Exactly, right. So, we totally rebel and we don't follow it anyway. So really what it comes down to is life is too short in my opinion to eat food that doesn't taste good to you. I spent so many years of my life eating shakes, and smoothies and all these things, all kinds of food that was 'healthier', are supposed to help you lose weight and tasted bad to me. And

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

it only made me overeat more. So, it's natural and normal to get pleasure out of food. For human beings this is natural and normal.

So, what we have to do is we create a plan that's individual to each person that only includes food that you like to eat and that tastes good to you, that works with whatever your schedule is. I work with people who live in New York City and order every single meal out. They literally don't have one box of food or anything, one banana in their kitchen. All the way to people who have specific cultural limitations or limitations based on health needs. Some people are vegan or vegetarian. Some people want to do more of a primal type of thing, whatever.

This works with all of it. You just have to decide what do I like to eat, what tastes good to me. And then you have to pay attention when you eat those foods, how does my body respond? There are many times where we eat, I actually realized this, nuts, nuts are like a thing, everybody likes nuts. Well, I never really liked nuts that much but I thought, I should like nuts. People like nuts, maybe I should eat more. And I would constantly get a stomach ache.

And it took me forever to put together that connection of you know what, I think I'm going to stop eating nuts. I don't care how much everyone loves them.

Jody: What about a nut butter? That's good.

Katrina: Even nut butter I don't love. Peanut butter.

Jody: Really?

Katrina: It's just not my thing but I'm really trying to like it.

Jody: That's funny.

Katrina: And I'm just over it, I'm not going to try to like things anymore. I mean I'm 46 years old, enough with that. I like plenty of things that taste

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

great that my body responds so well to and we just eat those things. And then I'm also a fan of making however you eat really work for your family.

Because there were times I remember I was trying to do one thing and I would literally prepare a whole meal for my family, three kids and a husband. Sit them down to eat and then I'd go back into the kitchen and have to prepare something totally different for myself that would work with this plan. And that did not last long. I think I did this for six weeks before I was just like, "No." Talk about rebellion, I was like, "I'm not doing this."

And so, I think that there's ways if we get creative where we can basically still eat things that the whole family enjoys but just maybe modify it slightly for ourselves. So just making it a little bit different so that it's easy for us to still eat on plan with the family around. And then of course we have to work on our thoughts. So, say if it's taco night and you're making a taco salad and everyone is having the tortillas or the taco shells, instead of telling yourself, it's so sad and I'm not eating those and whatever those thoughts are.

Jody: Poor me.

Katrina: Poor me. We have to clean that up and recognize I know I'm eating amazing food that makes my body feel good that tastes so good. Let me focus on getting some enjoyment with this food that I am actually eating rather than stuffing it down really quick and then going, "I think I need more because I didn't get the pleasure out of that I had hoped." So, I really come from a very solutions focused place. I think this is, for me it comes from, I have training as an engineer which is it's all about solutions, problem solving.

And then as a doctor people would come to me with all kinds of problems with their kids. Their baby wouldn't sleep or their baby was having feeding problems or whatever. And so, I really feel like I developed this idea of there's for sure a solution, we just have to go find it. We just are going to figure it out and we're going to keep going until we figure it out. And that's

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

the way I approach this kind of program, or weight loss, or just finding this permanent solution.

There's for sure a way that you can eat that supports your body that makes you feel good, that works in your life. We just have to figure out what it is. And it doesn't have to be as complicated as we think.

Jody: That's so true. Okay, last question then I'll let you go, I know we're about out of time. But I love the way you titled this chapter Eating Against Your Own Will.

Katrina: Sometimes it feels like that.

Jody: Because I think so many of us are like, "Yes, it feels something takes over sometimes. And I'm eating against my own will." Can you speak to that?

Katrina: Yeah. I mean that was literally decades of my life, promising myself in the morning, I'm going to be good today. And I maybe even bring lunch to work and I'm totally going to eat this healthy food. And then even eat a good dinner. And then the kids would go to bed, it's like the finish line of your day, the kids are in bed and then it was just like I don't know what came over me. Here I am just eating, eating. It's the same thing like I said, cookies, cookies, cookies until I felt sick. What happened between the morning and the evening that all of a sudden that's my experience?

And then feeling bad about myself and promising to do better the next day. And so, we have to get ourselves out of that cycle and really start getting curious about what is the food actually doing for us? I think it's so easy to start blaming ourselves, thinking we have some sort of moral weakness, we're undisciplined. Something is fundamentally wrong with us and that's why we can't solve this. I don't think that's a very useful way of thinking about it all because first of all it's just not true.

But secondly, it doesn't help you create any solutions, you just end up repeating the same thing every day instead of looking at it like it's

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

interesting that at night I'm always reaching for those cookies. I wonder if I could create a little space between when I get the idea to walk into the pantry and want to grab those cookies to just check-in with myself and just to see what's going on. And I'm not saying I can't have the cookies. I just want to get a little bit more aware about what's actually going on for me and what the problem is that cookies are solving.

Let me just find out a little bit more and then as you explore that more and if you decide that you want to be more dedicated in your exploration of this you can start even going, "You know what? Okay, I've figured out this is really what's going on." Maybe I feel restless or I feel frustrated from the day or whatever. Well, maybe I'm just going to journal for two to three minutes. I'm just going to do that and after that if I want to eat the cookies I totally am going to. But that's the agreement that I made with myself.

And then maybe once you get going journaling you look up and it's been seven minutes you've been journaling and that's kind of cool. And you start realizing, you know what? Actually, the desire, it's not as much anymore. I could kind of take the cookies or leave them. So that's kind of cool. And maybe you still eat them but that's okay. Maybe next time you don't. And you just essentially you solve for the problem that you've been asking food to deal with. I think of it as the food is just like the band-aid over the wound.

And so, what we want to do is just figure out what is the wound. Let's just get curious, and observe it, and understand ourselves better, and approach ourselves with love, and kindness, and compassion as we do it. And then see what ends up happening. Sometimes we're like, "I feel like I need to be punished because I was mean to my kids today or really yelled at them, or something like that. That's interesting, that's good to know. So, it isn't actually about the cookies." This is great, we can work with this now.

Maybe this is something that I can journal about more, or I can pray about, or I can talk to someone close to me about. That's how we start to move past this rather than focusing, I mean to be 100% honest in the book I kind of didn't even really want to put a lot of guidance around food in there

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

because I feel like this other work is so, so, so important. But I also think that if I didn't put the other work in there then people would be disappointed.

You kind of need some of both but if you do this work it doesn't even really matter what you're eating, you're going to start feeling some improvement. Things are going to change for you for sure.

Jody: And that's what I love so much about what you do, Karina, is it's like, like you said, it's not even about food, and it's not about weight loss. And it's not about any of that. That's the way by which you uncover these other areas of your life that are needing attention and that make your life so much better, but that we just cover it up with food, cover it up.

Katrina: I remember early on coaching with somebody and she's like, "Listen, my life is so amazing. Everything in my life is great. All my relationships are great. I love my work. My house is amazing. My whole life is so great I just have this one problem. I cannot stop eating." And I thought, isn't that so fascinating. But that's the way that we think about this. We're like, "This is just this separate issue." And it's not. I had to help her to see the whole reason the rest of her life seemed like it was so amazing was because she was eating all the time.

Jody: So then when you take away the overeating and you take away the buffering suddenly you discover it's not as simple, and easy, and amazing. I think you and I both had a similar experience with that too where I was like, "No, I'm pretty laidback. I mean I don't get stress, I don't get anxious." And then you take away my buffer of food I'm like, "There it is."

Katrina: I'm not immune to this. I'm just like everybody else.

Jody: Yeah, but it's a more authentic life. And for those listeners of my podcast here who are members of the Church of Jesus Christ of Latter Day Saints like myself, I do think that's where the spirit speaks to us is when we cover it all up and I know for myself, if I'm sick with overeating, I can't feel the spirit in my life.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Katrina: No. You don't feel connection to anything outside of yourself. No, you feel heavy and dull.

Jody: That's right, even to the extent that once a month we fast, we go 24 hours without food to allow ourselves to empty out ourselves more or less to make room for inspiration from God. And so, there is something to that overeating is masking something really I think special and amazing part of your life.

Katrina: Absolutely. And I think that just the biggest message that I want to get across is if you struggle with this it doesn't mean anything is wrong with you. This is totally something, I mean of all people I felt like it was really hopeless with me. I mean I was really I mean about to just throw my hands up until I tried this random life coaching thing that I didn't even know what it was. And it just was such a, you know, if we want to call it luck, or guidance, or whatever. I was led to this thing that finally solved the problem so that I could help other people solve that problem.

I just think it's easy to think that won't work for me or I'm too far gone, or it's too hard for me, or I've got another one, I'm too old. I just think of it as you're never too old to have peace and freedom around food. Nobody wants to be dying still thinking about those 10 pounds they wanted to lose.

Jody: And last question, sorry, I know I said that was the last one but this is really the last one. What is it that would make someone who is a doctor decide to become a life coach instead?

Katrina: That's such a great question. Well, I obviously feel guided and led toward helping people for sure. When I made the transition I was in a period in my practice where I was feeling like where I was, while it was amazing and I had – I mean on paper it looked so great. I didn't feel like it was the right place for me anymore. And I was ready to kind of take a break and figure out what was next for me. And I wasn't sure if it was maybe going to be a different practice or something else.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

But kind of concurrently I found out about life coaching, was interested in that. And truly became a life coach only because I thought that I just wanted to learn more for myself and maybe to teach my kids. I was totally like, "They need to know this stuff." And then when I signed up and learned more and they could help me with this I thought, I think there might be a few doctors out there who could really benefit from this too. They probably want this. They're probably struggling like I was.

And then it turned out there were a lot of doctors who wanted it and I didn't miss being in practice and so it just kind of was this natural progression that turned into just a totally different way of helping people that's also super amazing that I love.

Jody: So good. Well, I love your work so much, Dr. Ubell.

Katrina: Thank you so much, I love it when you call me Dr. Ubell.

Jody: I know.

Katrina: Almost nobody calls me that anymore.

Jody: I know, I just like to sometimes. And thank you so much for coming on, thanks for your time. And everyone needs to go get How to Lose Weight for the Last Time. You can get it anywhere that you buy books, including Amazon, or anywhere else that you like to purchase books, yeah?

Katrina: Yes, absolutely, and thank you so much, Jody.

Jody: And you can also learn more from Katrina at Weight Loss for Busy Physicians Podcast which I listen to being not a physician, still very relevant. And anywhere else you want to send people?

Katrina: I think those are the main places. Go grab the book.

Jody: Go get it, alright.

Katrina: Tell your friends about it.

375: How to Lose Weight for the Last Time with Dr. Katrina Ubell

Jody: Thanks, Katrina.

Katrina: Thank you.

Hey there, if you enjoy this podcast or even if you just find that it sort of piques your curiosity, or it makes you think, you're going to love the book that I wrote. It's called *Better Than Happy: Connecting with Divinity Through Conscious Thinking*. And it's available now at Amazon in print or kindle version. Or if you want me to read it to you, head over to audible and grab the audio version. And why not grab a copy for your sister, your best friend, or your mom while you're there too. Just saying.