

Julie: Say goodbye to the food police and hello to peace. Welcome to the Love Food podcast, hosted by dietitian and food behavior expert, Julie Duffy Dillon. This authentically engineered series is in the form of a love letter, welcoming you to reconnect with food. Now pour a cup of coffee or a margarita and let's begin.

Julie: Hi and welcome to episode 266 of the Love Food podcast. I'm Julie Duffy Dillon, registered dietitian and partner on your food peace journey. I am so glad you're here. Thank you for connecting today, and what's for dinner tonight? [Laughs] Seriously, what's for dinner, and what are you making me? Um, this episode is a rebroadcast from one that was way back a few years ago that is unavailable now in Apple Podcasts since we can only go back 100 episodes. This is one that's way back in the archive. So, I wanted to pull it out because it is one of the hardest parts for many of you who take care of someone else along your food peace journey. I know that when I get asked, hey, what's for dinner, it feels like nails on the chalkboard, and I have shared with you before that I don't actually enjoy cooking in any way, shape or form. Really, like doing anything that's really common for most dietitians like gardening, cooking, anything like that. I mean it's so unappealing to me, and so I've always felt odd as a dietitian, but I know I'm not the only one out there that doesn't enjoy these kind of tasks, and also, I am so exhausted by the time the day is over and need to make meals. So, it could be really complicated to have this extra decision. This extra stress. And also trying to repair your own relationship with food while being in charge of modeling food peace. That's a lot for your shoulders to bear. And this episode, I got a chance to interview Rachel Goodman who is a dietitian that specializes in helping people in this space when you're feeling this kind of pain point of helping to take care of other people, and also helping your own food peace journey. So, she has so much amazing wisdom, that I can't wait to share it with you again. But before we get to this episode's letter and hear from Rachel, a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): Do you have PCOS, and you are ready to divorce that dumpster fire also known as PCOS diets? Check out my free PCOS roadmap. I include ways to start off rejecting diets while living with PCOS. I get down to some tools that I find that have helped so many people over the years, including really naming who's to blame, and how do you actually interact with these cravings? Are they useful? Should you ignore them? What should you do with them? This is what I explore in the road map and so much more. If you are interested, go to [juliedillonrd.com/freebies](http://juliedillonrd.com/freebies) and you'll get right to it. Again, my free PCOS roadmap is at [juliedillonrd.com/freebies](http://juliedillonrd.com/freebies).

Julie: All right enough of all that. Let's get to this episode's letter.

Julie (as letter writer): Dear food. The worst question my children can ask me is “what's for dinner?” It's a daily assault on my desire to avoid thinking about you altogether. For me to answer my children's question, I need to have thought about you, what would be tasty, what my children would like, what will nourish them. And then when I have thought about you, I then have to prepare you. I find this utterly overwhelming and exhausting down to my bones. Did you notice I don't ask myself, what would I like to eat? I don't know the answer to that question. I am so divorced from you that I don't know what I would want when I feel hungry. And food, so you know, I have felt hungry for as long as I can remember. Here's what I do know about you, food: I know that it's not my fault I am fat, and it's not your fault either. I feel like we got off on the

wrong foot. My mom was scared of you, food, and did the things women do to keep you at bay. She did the best she could with what she had. But it's left its mark. I watched, and I felt constrained and angry. So, I very angrily and defiantly ate what I wanted, but eating because you're angry doesn't lead to food peace either. I talk about you so positively with my kids and I put on such a cheerful food neutral voice of dinner and lunch and breakfast and snacks and all the times that seem to talk about food. My children would never ever know that you and I don't really get on. That is a promise. But truthfully, I want to not think about you. You make me so anxious and demoralized. Do you think you and I might be able to make peace? Sincerely, Mom secretly searching for food peace.

Julie: Hey there, letter writer. Thank you so much for this note, and I know there are many caregivers out there who can totally relate to the struggle. And I know it gets complicated when you have been brought up with a very complicated relationship with food. I really think what you're doing to help your family just not carry on this tradition of chronic dieting and body hate is so very important. So, in order to really dive deep into your letter, I'm going to give a call to Rachel Goodman. She's a dietitian that I got to know when I was on her podcast called Beyond The Food. And Rachel is someone that helps a lot of moms with similar relationships with food to find a way how to just survive this kind of transition. So, let's go ahead and give Rachel a call.

Rachel: Hi!

Julie: Hey, Rachel, Julie Duffy Dillon here, how are you doing?

Rachel: I'm good. I'm good. How are you?

Julie: I'm great, and I'm so excited to chat with you again. I had so much fun chatting on your podcast Beyond the Food, and I'm glad we have a chance to talk again and go through this letter.

Rachel: Yeah, me too. I'm so excited to be on your podcast because I've actually listened to it. So excited to be here. Thanks for having me.

Julie: You're so very welcome! So, did you get a chance to sit with this letter and read through it?

Rachel: Yes, yes, absolutely. And I think just so much of it, um will also resonate with other moms who are struggling um, with their body image and dieting and trying to give something better to their kids. So, I'm excited to dive in.

Julie: Yeah. You know when I read the letter as a mom, I'm like, I do feel like the nails on the chalkboard too when they're like, what's for this meal? You know what?

Rachel: Oh my God, yes, I do too.

Julie: I don't want to do it again.

Rachel: I so related to that, and we're going to totally talk about that for sure.

Julie: Yeah. So, when you were reading it, what did you, what was your general impression about what this person is experiencing?

Rachel: Um, I think just overall frustration and exhaustion, exhaustion put together, and I think that's um, some of it's just common as being a mom, because I think motherhood is the hardest job. Um, and I don't see that in a cliché way, like, constantly judging ourselves and wanting the best for our children and that just makes it harder when you're struggling with your own self judgment on your food and body. And so, I just sense a lot of, like, frustration and judgment, but like, wanting better, like, she's aware that there is something better, which is already a step forward.

Julie: What do you, what do you picture as that- that better? Like what is, what is she connecting to?

Rachel: So I think it's the fact that she is giving her children already a better foundation with food and knowing that that's what should be normal and recognizing that what she went through um, that pain and that narrative she was given as a child that damaged her relationship with food is not the right way, it's not normal. Um, and so she knows there's something better because she's giving that to her children even though she may be struggling, which is again, already, you know, a step forward because she recognizes that. Awareness is the first step to everything.

Julie: Yeah, for sure, you know, just hearing you talk about that, it was a complexity of the letter I didn't really, I didn't like see right away and and um, you know what I hear from that is connecting with, like, the grief of I never have, I never had what I'm trying to give these kids of mine, and how sad that is for my childhood, you know, like, that's that's hard.

Rachel: Oh yeah. Oh yeah, absolutely. I think it's- so many times and she actually talks about um, eating out of anger or defiance and I think acknowledging that and allowing herself to feel that and know that I think, and I find this also um, with other people who had, because she said her family and the way she grew up set this, like, unhealthy example with food, which is- kind of sounds like what she's angry about, that it led her to this place. Um, and I think a lot of people who where it started in childhood, they get to adulthood and they get so angry at themselves. But if you're able to acknowledge that you didn't choose that narrative, you didn't choose for someone to tell you at the age of 10 that your body is an issue, or that you, you know, or demonizing food or to stop eating sweets or whatever it is that caused you to have an unhealthy relationship and struggle right now, it's not your fault and allowing yourself to feel that anger, but don't direct it at yourself. Do you know what I mean? And know that you didn't do this narrative, but you can write the next chapters if you just allow yourself to feel whatever it is you're feeling without judgment, that's- even that is the tiniest step forward.

Julie: I think that's really important because when I read the letter too, um, they're almost, I was connecting with like the anger and the resentment and almost a rejection of like, well if I'm eating out of anger, then that's not helping me move forward on my journey towards food peace. And my reaction was like, well why isn't it? You know, it's an acknowledgement of the anger and acceptance of it. Which acceptance isn't a bad thing. It's like permission to, yeah, like you

didn't choose that narrative like you said, I think that was really powerful when you when you said that and um, if you- if we don't acknowledge it and accept it, I feel like that's just gonna make it brew, and like, multiply.

Rachel: For sure, and when you don't accept it and you're just stuck in that anger, then you pile on the judgment on yourself of like, why can't I stop being angry, and all of that kind of inhibits your ability to learn, to be curious, to be present, and to move forward. So just knowing it's okay to be angry and not judging that and letting yourself just experience the moment, because that's really what mindfulness is, it's not necessarily eating like your salad perfectly to fullness, it's, you know, it's like experiencing the moment, if you let yourself experience the moment in whatever positive or negative way it's feeling, you can then remove the judgment and learn, and from there move forward.

Julie: I think that is so powerful because I really hesitate to use the word mindfulness because-

Rachel: Yeah.

Julie: I guess you do too! Because people I think, and you know, people that I've worked with over the years, and I think myself included, there's this like hidden kind of rule and I said it's like, a trick to get us to eat less. And that's not what I think the intention is with mindfulness. It is, it's more compassion and acceptance with where we are to be. You know?

Rachel: For sure. I think it's like, a term that was hijacked by diet culture of "you're mindful then you can eat less and then lose weight." Like that's kind of the intention. But mindfulness doesn't work like that. Like, you can't decide what the outcome is. You have to be present to let the- to realize what the outcome will be just from letting it play out by being present, than like deciding beforehand what the outcome will be.

Julie: Yeah. Oh that's so important. I'm so glad we're talking about this. Well, so, considering everything that this person is going through, which again, like this long term complicated relationship with food because of the cards that they were just handed, you know, and then, seeing how that was harmful, and then wanting to do better with their next generation, um, what would you recommend to someone who's going through this? Either the letter writer, someone else that you maybe connect with in real life, like, what would you say are some first few steps?

Rachel: So I would say this, this letter had two components to it. One is just, you know, the practical aspect of preparing dinners, which I know- it's kind of this thing, I don't know what it is like as a mom also, you know, dinners happen every single night, it's not like you don't make dinners ever, and yet every night it's like, what I'm making for dinner or like, maybe you planned the week and then the next week is like, I don't know, dinner just seems to be this like, big thing. Um and so there's the aspect of just like, the practical aspect of preparing dinner, and it sounds like the stress0 it sounds like that because she had an unhealthy relationship with food growing up, she really wants to give her children, um you know, the best, most optimal, positive environment which is great, but perhaps based on her language, like when my children ask me what I want, it has to be tasty, and they'd like, and nourish them. Like almost all this pressure that it needs to be perfect for them um, kind of giving them what she didn't have. So I think just

starting off with relieving yourself of that pressure where you know, what if not every meal has to be exactly all the things they like? Or they don't even have to be necessarily cooked every single night, as long as your children have at least one or two things that, you know for sure they're going to eat, right? Because they're also eating breakfast and lunch, like dinner is not everything, it's big, but it's not everything. So, what if you just relieved yourself of that pressure where it doesn't have to be perfect to exactly what they like? And I think that's also healthier for them to know to adapt as well, because when people are doing intuitively, I think they have this idea of, I always have to have the exact satisfying meal, and part of eating intuitively is also being flexible in knowing that it's okay if not every single one is perfectly to my satisfaction, because, you know, as long as I'm giving my body what it needs and there's a new meal and a new opportunity to enjoy what I like. And so firstly, reducing that pressure of having it perfect for the kids, does that make sense?

Julie: That makes perfect sense. And I um, I, I think a lot about like the cycles of generational kind of habits, you know, and and, um when those of us who are brought up in certain dynamics and environments, we acknowledge like, oh, that was a harmful thing and you kind of see the other sides and the nuances, I think a lot of times our reaction is to be the polar opposite and to be really kind of like, perfectionistic in a different way, and that's what I was wondering too, although like a part of the struggle, like you and are saying, we're like, oh my gosh, it's so relatable. But that's also part of what probably makes it harder, because of perfectionism is gonna be so constant, and like exhausting because yeah, they, we need to eat all the time. And you know, the thing about dinner too, I think it was probably in an Ellyn Satter book, um, I'll put some links to her stuff in the show notes, but like an Ellyn Satter book along the way when I was, you know, even though I was already a dietitian, when I started my family, I still needed to re read a lot of books because of the perfectionism and like, wanting to do it just right. But she mentioned in there, especially when our kids are young, or I mean my, my oldest is in middle school, so I don't know if, I mean she still is this way too, but they're eating all day long, and so as adults, I think we have, we have this picture of this dinner, especially to be this like big magical, like this is the big time, which I mean yeah, there's family time, but like, it's going to be this big impressionable thing and she's like, don't sweat dinner as much because kids are tired by then, we're tired by then, and there was something about that permission for me that I was like, I just can't worry about it that much, and when I worry about it, I think that's the part that's going to hurt my, like the family kind of experience, because the- me as a mom is um, distracted and getting in that perfectionistic kind of tail spin. So, um yeah, so when you were saying all that, I was like, oh, those are like the words I need to hear too, thank you.

Rachel: Yes, yes. Oh my gosh, because then you can also be present. And by the way, this is so funny that we're talking about this now, because yesterday I had that moment that- that scenario, I happened to stay longer at my sister's house, we went to visit her and we were with the kids, and we got home really late, and I had dinner that I planned to make, but I wasn't home all day, so I didn't make it. And so, you know what? They had leftover pasta from the day before, they had cottage cheese, I cut up some avocado and tomatoes, and that was their dinner, and guess what? They eat what they wanted to eat, you know, one of them had the avocado and pasta, the other one wanted the tomatoes, and they kind of also snacked earlier in the day, so that was just what was dinner, doesn't always have to be cooked right, like there's an overall picture, sometimes it could just be scrambled eggs, like your kids will be fine, as long as it's food she

knows that, that they'll eat. Um, it doesn't always have to be this like, perfectly like cooked chicken with rice and broccoli. Although, you know, we're talking about just overall picture finding that balance. We're not, it doesn't always have to be this like ideal picture of dinner that we grew up to believe is like, has to be dinner.

Julie: Yeah. Yeah, it can be a peanut butter sandwich or the drive through and that's still taking care of your family.

Rachel: For sure.

Julie: Yeah, I love that. Um, well and you know this, this letter has so many different directions. Um, what about some of the other things that this person is bringing up? What would you say are some steps to helping some of their other struggles?

Rachel: Yeah, so one of the things she was saying is like, do you notice I don't ask myself what I would like to eat, and don't even know how to answer that question? Um, and possibly also because she's been just so disconnected with food, and just remembering also that this comes back to the anger and the judgment is that, that- the more we're stuck in that place, the harder it will be to figure out what you like. Um, so again, practicing that self compassion, but also when you do make dinner for your kids um, rather than putting all this attention on just your kids, which is great and important, um but rather than getting hyper focused on wanting it to be perfect for your kids, take a step back, start to get curious and say, you know, let me actually taste these foods for what they are. Do I like the food that I'm making my kids, right? Um, that's right there is an opportunity and knowing that again, um if you're making dinner and you realize that you prefer one food over the other, then maybe making like two foods, you know, your kids will for sure prefer. And then one that you like, because what I find sometimes happens is, and I had a client like this as well, where you become a short order cook, and then that just becomes pressure and you're preparing your kids exactly what they like and then you what they like and then it just becomes stressful. So, you know, finding that balance of starting to ask yourself, do I actually like the foods that I'm making for my kids? If you do, great, um if you find that you like other things, there can be a compromise, right? You're a family, we're all living together. Um and so, that's also one place where you can start, just dinner time in letting yourself experience that food, and just asking yourself, and knowing that it might take time to really figure out what you like. But the more you can be present and taste it and remove the stress of trying to get it perfect, the more you'll start to notice things and learn.

Julie: Yeah, there needs to be yeah, there needs to be like space to figure that part out, and that- I think for those of us who are brought up with a caregiver who struggles with food peace and, or maybe is in the throes of an eating disorder, or just really values certain body sizes, that's something that we don't get a chance to really watch, is someone having pleasure with food, and so we probably don't learn it as well. And so, um, like we were saying earlier too, I think like dinner time for some people depending on their own like, circadian rhythms, I know for me I'm exhausted by dinner time. So it may be that dinner is just not gonna be the most pleasurable meal for you, you know, and, and maybe, or maybe not have as much space to be able to connect like, and learn that part, you know? Um, so there may be other opportunities, like um, I'm hoping that this letter writer, or anyone listening who can identify with them, like, maybe they have a snack

time or another meal where they have more alone time where they can like, experiment with different food, and be like, hey, I wonder if I like avocados, you mentioned them, you know, let me see if I like them and um, because yeah, it takes so much time in the intuitive eating space to like, connect with, like what, what do you actually want? Because you never got a chance to, to learn that part and um, you know that's such a big part of um, driving the future behaviors is like, what actually tastes good to me, you know, and what feels good like during and after and um, yeah, like that just takes time and space and something else I think about too with that is, sometimes in different seasons of our lives with- different seasons of our life, we don't have space, like we just, I think about like, toddler time and newborn time and there are certain times were like, there just isn't. And so like you said earlier, you know, we need to encourage flexibility. You know, sometimes it's not gonna be that pleasurable. You know?

Rachel: And I love, I love that you brought that up actually, because just to take a step further in terms of trying things at other times of day, I actually find that it's, and moms in general when I speak to them, it's hard to be mindful and really experience your food when you're at a table with kids who typically are not just sitting there relaxed, calm, like quiet, like it, sometimes you can get hectic with dinner, depending, especially depending on the personality of your kids and their age. And so maybe for you would be rather than putting the pressure on figuring it out during dinner, what if you found the meal that was most calm for you, and you're like, let me experiment at that time, and you could always, you know, have that food at dinner too like, who said there's a rule of, I have to eat this at lunch or that dinner, like you can eat whichever food you want at whatever time. So, maybe what you liked that lunch when it was calm and quiet and you realize you liked it, you can start incorporating it at dinner. So, just finding that time that works for you um, that, and this is not just like, let's say whether you're a stay at home mom or a working mom. Like if, let's say a stay at home mom lunch is the best time for an experiment. Um, let's just say, and let's say someone who's working during the day, um, I had someone who told me, she was like, I really don't like lunchtime because I'm at work and I'm distracted. So lunchtime was not a good time for her to figure these things out. So just applying it individually to your life and figuring out where is that space where I can start to like, kind of set aside for myself to experiment with foods and see what I like?

Julie: Right? Yeah. And I can see how, if we are so worried about doing it wrong for our kids, how that wouldn't- that would get in the way of that work. And so yeah, really practicing that flexibility and um, and letting yourself, like not have to be so exactly correct in how you're raising your kids with the food stuff that, because this person, and anyone listening who acknowledges that their relationship with food is complicated because of how they were raised, like their awareness is already like light years ahead of the majority of the world.

Rachel: Yes. Oh my god.

Julie: They're already doing so many things that are different, you know?

Rachel: Yeah, that's exactly what I was thinking when I was reading this, I'm like, you go mom, like first of all, give yourself all the compassion and also give yourself the biggest pat on the back, because you're already, you know, ten steps ahead even though it doesn't feel like it, because there are just so many parents- um and again, it's not the narrative they necessarily

chose, not to judge them or blame them, but there are so many parents who continue damaging just the next generation with their own struggles, and so you're stopping that cycle. That is incredible. And you know, you reached out here and sent this question, so you're looking for ways to move forward, and that itself is a huge accomplishment.

Julie: Oh my gosh, yeah, it's like going to set the stage for her children then to raise their children differently. And it's only gonna advance it, I mean, think about generations down the line, how it's going to be in a, in a place where her future generation can do more in the world. Like it's just gonna give them space to be able to like, you know, help solve world peace. I don't- I think we'll have-

Rachel: Amen!

Julie: -we'll have space because we're not distracted by, you know, our bodies, uh you look a certain way or we need to eat perfectly. Oh, I could go on and on with this with you, and I think um, I just think there's so much that this letter writer is experiencing that other people are gonna relate to. So, but we need to kind of pivot a little bit. And uh, one thing that we have on the show is something called a food peace syllabus. And if you're new to the Love Food podcast, the food peace syllabus is a collection of resources, like other podcasts and blog posts and courses, and anything under the sun that helps to further our food peace journey, and you can get access to the latest edition at [juliedillonrd.com](http://juliedillonrd.com). And Rachel, what would you like to add to our syllabus?

Rachel: Oh, this is great. I would love to add um, I have a free three day video crash course called "Secrets to Stop Overeating and Binging". Um and it's not in any way demonizing overeating or anything like that, you know, it's really about if you're eating in ways that feel out of control, if you are frustrated, if you're like this mom who's just feeling guilty and anger and judgment and all of that, it's giving you the fundamental steps to understand why it is you're eating this way. There's something so impairing about understanding, um, the reasoning behind, because it's not the food, it's, you know, we know the difference, most people know the difference between an apple and a donut, that's not, it's not the food. Um so, it's really getting to why you're eating this way, and practical applications to resolve that, you know, remove the guilt, how to tune into hunger fullness, we talk about emotional eating as well. Each day comes with um, a handout that you can download um, and practically personalized and apply it to your life. So, um, you know, you can get that, it's absolutely free. When you sign up, you get immediate access.

Julie: Awesome. I will put a link to that in the show notes for anyone listening, it sounds awesome. And uh, if someone wants to know more about you and your podcast and the work you're doing, where is the best way for them to find you?

Rachel: Okay, so I love to hang out on Instagram, that's my favorite platform. So you can follow me [@dietitian.rachelgoodman](https://www.instagram.com/dietitian.rachelgoodman). And my podcast, by the way, um I actually am switching the name starting next week, so I didn't say anything yet. Yeah, yeah, so it's going to be More Than What You Eat, that's gonna be the name of the podcast next week. I'm just the middle of switching it over. So, when people are gonna be listening to this, if they go to be on the phone, they're not gonna find it.

Julie: Thank you for saying that then.

Rachel: Sure. So uh, More Than What You Eat podcast and my Instagram, those are just two great places to learn more.

Julie: Yeah, awesome and yeah, definitely, I love your Instagram. It's- you make really um, engaging kind of images, I like them, so I will put all of those on the shownotes, so you can easily have access to all the things that Rachel is doing, and Rachel, thank you so much for your time and your expertise and your compassion. I really appreciate it.

Rachel: Thank you. This was great. I am, I'm really excited to have been on here um, and I appreciate that you thought of me, so thank you.

Julie: So there you have it. Thank you so much, letter writer, for your note, and I hope the conversation that I just had with Rachel Goodman provided you some next steps. We are rooting for you all along the way. Seriously, we are, and we know that even just getting to the place where you are and your awareness has done so much for your family and for your future generations, and we hope that you connect with that, that kind of truth, and it just helps you to further feel like you have the space and the power to continue your food peace journey.

Julie: So, I see that food is written back. But before we get to that, this episode was brought to you by my free PCOS road map. Get to it at [juliedillonrd.com/freebies](http://juliedillonrd.com/freebies). If you enjoyed this episode of the Love Food podcast. I always, always, always love it if you leave a rating or review, subscribe, or share the episode. Doing any of those things really helps the show grow. It helps more people to connect with Love Food and also like, find out that they actually can move away from diets, and isn't that magical? Isn't that what we want for everyone? So, thank you in advance for sharing these episodes and helping the show grow.

Julie: Alright, until next time. Take care.

Julie (as food): Dear Mom secretly searching for food peace, Our history has been muddled and trampled on by your caregivers. We understand why you need your space from us, why you divorced us. You were and are only trying to stay safe for you and your family. Recognize how impactful your awareness is for you, your kids, and your future generations. This impact only requires your awareness, not perfection. In the day to day, practice compassion and flexibility. Call out the perfectionism. Doing so will give you fuel and ease on your food peace journey, and it will give your family the space, security, and connection to joyfully be satisfied with food and their body. Love, Food.

Julie: Thank you for listening. I am Julie Duffy Dillon, and this is the Love Food podcast. Do you want access to more food peace? Jump on over to my website and join my email list there. I share exclusive content that I don't share anywhere else. Get access to these tips and strategies by going to [juliedillonrd.com/signup](http://juliedillonrd.com/signup). And I look forward to seeing you here next week for another episode of the Love Food podcast. Take care.