

Julie: The Love Food podcast is brought to you in partnership with my PCOS and Food Peace course. Finally free yourself from endless PCOS, fatigue, frustration, shame, and guilt. For PCOS sufferers who are tired of ineffective diets and unhelpful advice, join me on a PCOS and food peace journey that will change your life forever. Grab all the details at pcosandfoodpeace.com. Say goodbye to the food police and hello to peace.

Julie: 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 238 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. Those of you who are starting your first few steps on your food peace journey, welcome. I know you have a long road ahead, but just know the journey is going to be so important and so fruitful. There are some twists and turns and boulders, and one of them we're talking about today: how we think about our body, especially as it relates to the experience of diet rock bottom and experiencing a life full of dieting. And acknowledging that like, oh yeah, okay, that's, that's not for me anymore. But yet, what do you do? What do you do when you live in a world that tells you your body is just not acceptable? How do you look in the mirror and say to your body, "yeah, you're mine. I accept you. I respect you." How do you do that? And like, through and through believe it. Well, I have a letter today to explore. And we also get to hear from guest expert Stephanie Dodier, who is a new friend of mine, someone that I just got to know in podcast land. And when I read this letter, I just knew Stephanie would have some amazing insight and she does not disappoint. This is an episode where you get step one, step two, step three. Like she gives you so many great ways to move forward. I can't wait for you to hear all of her insight. We will get to all the magic after a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): Early on as a dietitian, I learned that PCOS carb cravings were not like anything else when it comes to cravings. Cravings already can be complicated, but when you have PCOS, they can be so much more intense, with every cell in your body screaming to eat that plate of brownies. But yet, you're also told you have to cut out the very foods you crave. It's really complicated. And I know you're told that you're supposed to just ignore them or trick them, but I have something different for you. What if you said hello to the cravings and goodbye to the shame? If you're puzzled on how this even can work, or you want to know more, check out my pop up PCOS podcast. It's going to have a limited run, the end of April 2021, you can get to it at juliedillonrd.com/popup. What's a pop up podcast? Well, it's a podcast that's still free, and you can get to it on the same app that you're listening to right now. But you just need to sign up for it first and get a very special link so just you can subscribe to it. So, if you want to get to it, and I hope you will, go to juliedillonrd.com/popup. There, you will get access to the link, and you will get five special um, private episodes, just for your ears and everybody else who signs up, delivered right to your app when they are live. They are going to be just around for the week of April 24th, so as they come up in your feed, make sure you listen to them. They will be quick, informative podcasts. But you need to listen to them that week in order to get to them. So again, if you want to check it out and get access to this podcast, go to juliedillonrd.com/popup.

Julie (as letter writer): Dear food and body, It's been thirty years of turmoil and struggle. But now that is changing. Thank you for being so accepting of intuitive eating and making it feel like it was created just for me. Thank you for both speaking up and listening to me through everything. I am most grateful for how motivated and dedicated I am to feel, deal, heal my part of binging, restricting in a fat body as a coping mechanism; compassionate focused therapy and all of the amazing intuitive eating, health at every size, courses, podcast, books, resources and services; my husband, a quote "natural intuitive leader" who has no preconceptions of health size and is just a beautifully innocent yet supportive person. I do still struggle, however, with the desire to shrink my fat body. I know my worth is more than my weight. I know my health complications, infertility, hypertension, PCOS, painful joints, hypothyroid, and my body size are not my fault. I know my body is not broken and quote, "health" is not a moral obligation. I 100% accept the psychology and subscribe to all of it. I also understand why I feel this way in a fatphobic world, obsessed with weight loss. I am grateful for every single person that is challenging the harmful notion that fat bodies are shameful, grotesque, and only deserve to be seen as a "before" picture. But knowing all of that doesn't seem to be enough to address this body dysmorphia. I do not feel like I belong or can ever truly love my body at my current size and in my current condition. Can I still love or respect myself and want to change? To reduce the size of my body for me? Not to fit into society's fat positive or obesity-shaming framework? Just to feel like the body I see staring back at me is mine? Love, wishful thinker.

Julie: Thank you so much, wishful thinking, for your note. I really appreciate it, and I cannot wait for you to connect with my guest expert for today. Her name is Stephanie Dodier, and she is the host of the Going Beyond the Food show. I got a chance to talk to her about PCOS on her podcast, and when I was chatting with her, she had so much insight, and when I read your letter I was like, oh my gosh, this is the perfect letter for Stephanie. I know she's going to have so much insight, and let's go ahead and give Stephanie a call.

Stephanie: Hello?

Julie: Hey, Stephanie, it's Julie Duffy Dillon, how are you?

Stephanie: Fantastic. Very excited for this.

Julie: Oh, I'm so excited to talk to you again, and I feel like you're like my new friend.

Stephanie: Me too! That's what I said on social media today!

Julie: You did?

Stephanie: I'm meeting with my new friend!

Julie: I know! Like how come I didn't know you before? And the reason why we're saying this, listener, is because Stephanie invited me on her show, and it was so much fun and um, yeah, so I just had to have you on mine. But to the point is I sent you a letter and I'm wondering if you had a chance to read over it yet.

Stephanie: Absolutely. It was beautiful.

Julie: Wasn't it?

Stephanie: Yeah.

Julie: There's something about, I don't know if it's like aesthetics or just like the act of handwriting, but this letter was handwritten, and I think it's the first one I've ever gotten that was handwritten. And um, I don't know, it felt like more of a connection uh, for me, I don't know if it did for you, but it was lovely.

Stephanie: More of a connection, and right down my alley, like it was the perfect letter for me.

Julie: Good! You know, I try to do that, and when I did read this one, um I got it not too long ago, but when I was like, when I read it, I was like, this is the one for Stephanie. So that's good. That means I picked the right one for you. Um, well, so since we both were in love with this letter, what was your general impression reading it? Like what is this person experiencing?

Stephanie: This person experienced what the vast majority of long term dieter aka chronic dieter have experienced, which is this, I don't know what else to do. Like I've done the intuitive eating and trying to work on my body image, but something is just missing. And she says it in here, she says, "but knowing all the facts about fatphobia and weight stigma, it just doesn't seem to be enough to address this body dysmorphia." So there's something missing.

Julie: Yeah. Yeah. And the thing that it's shining a light on is like, we can't be all like chill vibes only body positive, because we're going to be missing out on like actual healing and reality too, like that's what I was thinking about. Like this is so like, common. Like this is the space, especially yeah, the people who have like identified like yeah, I'm at diet rock bottom here, and I'm doing the work and um yeah, I would imagine...I don't know if you agree with me but like, this is the part where like, this is where it gets messy but it needs to get messy.

Stephanie: Well I think this is so, in my world, what she's describing is what I coin the term "diet brain."

Julie: Oooo, tell me more about that.

Stephanie: Well it's where we know that diet culture and dieting has impacted our hunger, fullness, and satisfaction signal, we know that it impacted our body image with all the thin ideals and the wellness, all of that. But we haven't yet shined the light of how diet culture has literally rewired the way we think, and that's why I call it diet brain. So what I have observed in my world, because I really focused on the mindset pieces, that we have this four elements that are very common, which is the all or nothing mindset, perfectionism, people pleasing, and the whole mental filtering, it's my body's fault. And in the world of cognitive behavior- behavior therapy, it's called thought errors. It's a mechanism that our brain goes through to create safety in a very unsafe environment. It rewires the way that we produce thoughts in our brain to create as much

safety as possible. And we know that diet culture is very unsafe. So what she's experiencing is thought errors around her body.

Julie: Mm, that's cool.

Stephanie: And the way out of this is not, and she says it, like I have a lot of facts around why I shouldn't be hating my body and why it's not my fault. Like it's not more intellectual information. What she needs is tools and techniques to change the way she thinks. Challenge the beliefs in her subconscious mind, change the way she thinks, and produce new thoughts, new intentional thoughts. We speak of that in my world. So we can rewire, reprogram our mind to think in a way that we will no longer struggle in her case with her body image.

Julie: Right. Yes, we want- I love that. Um, thought errors. Um, there's something about it that is um, accepting, you know what it is. It's not like just denying it and pushing it away, like these are thought errors like these um, sometimes people will talk about false truths. You know, these are things that we hold really close, but they're errors. So you can rewrite them, rewire them. Well, if someone relates to this letter and is like, oh, I have these same thought errors. What, what would you recommend to that person as some first few steps forward?

Stephanie: Absolutely. So what I would recommend is google the term self coaching, right? So CBT is a field of research in the world of psychology that's typically done 1 on 1. But over the last few years, many of us have adapted CBT cognitive behavior therapy in the way that the client can do it themselves at home. This is in the non harmful situation where somebody is in the recovery, or somebody has not a threat to their health. So we need to go in a one on one setting. Other than that we can do self coaching, and self coaching will do kind of three things: will identify the thoughts that are causing the suffering, two, will go into say, okay, so this is the thought that I'm having, right? Likely, it's coming from a long held belief in her case around body image, what a woman's body should look like, make a decision, right? Empowerment. Going to say, okay, I'm done having this thought. What other thought can I replace it with that's going to create the feeling of the emotion I want to have in regards to my body? Many women will say, I want to create confidence. That's basically the three steps of self coaching. Looking at what we're thinking, seeing how it creates our suffering, making a decision to change, and create a new thought to replace the old one.

Julie: Yeah, so someone practicing this, okay, I'm just thinking as, some of the, some of the thought work that I've done with my own therapist, some of it was, I don't know, it didn't take too long to kind of start to, to change and other things took the whole five years that I was in weekly therapy. But so, what would you say for this type of work? You know, what's the expectation for someone who's exploring this self coaching?

Stephanie: Very similar to your experience.

Julie: Okay.

Stephanie: Some thoughts will be very quick to change and some other are deeply rooted. I want you to imagine like, you know, a road, you know, when we, we have the trace of our car going

on the road, like the two grooves on each side. Some of those thoughts have been repeated literally millions of times in your mind. Like I hate my body or I don't like my body, right? So what we're trying to do is re create new grooves on the lane beside it, right? So it's going to take a lot of repetitions. So compassion, self-compassion is essential to this work. The work of mindset is not short term, it's continuous, and it requires you not shaming yourself for having the old thought. We call it not engaging in the old thoughts. Like I still have after five years, I'm in a, I'm in a fat body. So I'm constantly being um, I don't want to say trigger, because it's not the case anymore. But I'm constantly being challenged to not find my body, not find diversity into what I'm looking at. So I constantly have the thought like, something is wrong with my body. The difference is the thought comes in, I see it, and I let it go. I don't attach to it and I don't create drama around it in my inner world.

Julie: Yeah, that reminds me of a lot of the, the dialogue and then also my own personal experience doing trauma work. It's a very similar like, over time doing, which I feel like even just talking about it makes it seem so trite, but like doing this work and making sure cultivating so much compassion as you are. Um, recognizing these, these errors, these thought errors, and then um, and examining them, where they come from. And then also like um, by now I feel like for a lot of the, the thought errors that I've had, it's like, I notice they're still there. But yeah, there's it's just an acknowledgement, and then they kind of move on down the stream. You know, as I, that's how I'm picturing them as I, in my brain is just like, there they go. You know?

Stephanie: Here's what we do, a tip. Like I'm going to show this. Here's what we do with our students. We tell them to name their brain. Give a name to your brain. Like Molly for an example. Right? So separate your identity, yourself from your brain. Those thought error are coming from your automatic subconscious brain. It's not you. So when that thought comes into your brain, you can have fun with it and say, hey, here we go, Molly's going at it again. It's, it's not you. It's Molly, you see?

Julie: Yeah, yeah.

Stephanie: It makes it easier to not attach to it.

Julie: Yeah. The, the, the, the visualization that you gave us too with the car and the grooves. That's really great. I remember um, gosh years ago I had Tracy Brown on here on this, this podcast, and she talked about when she was in her place of eating disorder recovery. And really just in the beginning of it, um, I think she was helping her family like, mow the lawn using like a big riding lawnmower. And she noticed that as she was like having these thoughts over time doing this work um, literally like mowing the grass over the summer. Um she noticed that there was like tracks being laid and she was like, ah, this is just like my thinking, and like literally she used that to kind of help her. And um, I know for me I've, I've thought about a lot about like holding a machete. Like cutting down some new roads as we're trying to change how our thoughts and, and my thoughts and feelings, wow, they're so connected. And I know a lot of people I talk to, they are as well, and so it can take time to like, build these new roads, but I love separating the brain, like doing that sounds really therapeutic, and um, you know, I think about this person um, living in a world that's so full of fatphobia, like they describe, and like how you

and I talked about, I would imagine it takes a lot more attention to that road, you know, to like be able to withstand so much of what diet culture is like, screaming at us all the time.

Stephanie: Another thing, I'll just quickly say this, because I think it helps a lot of women that have been chronic dieters, the what I call the "good girl syndrome." Most women have been raised into this pattern of, of literally being good, right? Being a polite, being compliant, and being thin, right? There's a lot of things that are women's and young girls are socialized to, that, we're not born wanting to be good girls, we're socialized to this character we need to play, which includes the thin ideal. And we think something is wrong with us, with our brain for thinking this way, but the truth is our brain has been programmed, socialization has happened probably between the age of six and twelve, and now all we have is the internalization of these good girl syndrome's metrics that we need to hit. When we can see that and detach and say it's nothing wrong with my brain, it's just the way I was socialized, it sometimes makes it easier to let go of those thought patterns.

Julie: Yeah, I so agree. Like naming all the bullshit and what, what trained us to think in a certain way? It's so powerful because it does, it like, sometimes people are like, well then I just feel so angry. I'm like, well we have a lot to be angry about! You know?

Stephanie: We discover all of this and it's like anger 101.

Julie: Yeah, yeah. And it's not something to put into like, pull in, but to let out, you know? Um yeah, that's hard when you're trying to be polite and compliant. So we have something on the show, Stephanie, called the food peace syllabus. And if you're a new listener, this is a collection of resources that help your food peace journey, and you can get to your most recent copy at juliedillonrd.com. And um would you like to add anything to it, Stephanie?

Stephanie: I would like to contribute my podcast, because I think our unique approach to um, body image and intuitive eating with this strong focus on mindset is something new to our world of non diet approach. And I think it can help a segment of the population. So Going Beyond the Food show, and let's start with podcast 249 that's called the Good Girl Syndrome.

Julie: Ooo, perfect. I will put a link right to that episode. So if someone wants to know more about you um, wants to work with you in whatever way that you work with people, where can they go?

Stephanie: First step is Going Beyond the Food podcast and you can grab our roadmap, which is our top five episode, and then if you want to engage in this kind of work, it's a trifecta, I call it, we do mindset, intuitive eating, and then body image, in that order. We start with mindset, it's called conquer and thrive. It's a group coaching program that you can come in at any time, and then we put you through three mini courses, one on each of the elements, mindset and intuitive eating and body image, in the world of body neutrality. That's what I teach.

Julie: Wonderful. Well, I will put links to everything in the show notes for you, listener, so you can just pop on over and explore what Stephanie has. It sounds like you have some really um,

important, amazing tools. So thank you so much for your time, your compassion, and your expertise.

Stephanie: Thank you.

Julie: So there you have it! Letter writer, I hope you got something from my conversation with Stephanie Dodier, and definitely check out her podcast and program. She's got so much wisdom that I know will help you along your food peace journey. And if you, letter writer or a listener, if you connected with Stephanie's advice, I'm wondering, what are you going to name your brain? I'm still trying to figure out the best name for my brain, but I will let you know what I pick. But we need to carry on because food has written back.

Julie: But before we get to foods letter, this episode of the Love Food podcast was brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. Get to all the details at pcosandfoodpeace.com.

Julie: If you enjoyed this episode, I would love it if you left a rating, a review, you subscribed or shared an episode. Doing any of those four acts of kindness really does help the show grow. You would be amazed how much those things really, really help. So doing those, I appreciate so much in advance.

Julie: Alright, so until next time, take care.

Julie (as food): Dear wishful thinker, we have come so far. So as we continue to climb, be sure to appreciate, you're still moving forward toward healing. This messy spot on our food peace journey acknowledges the lies and thought errors, and challenges us to compassionately rewrite them. Putting this all together may bring up more sadness, grief, and anger. Notice when this happens, and place that fury where it belongs, on white supremacy and its diet culture and misogynistic puppets. Moving this boulder will give you the clarity to see your body as yours. 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. And I look forward to seeing you here next week for another episode of the Love Food podcast. Take care.