

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 243 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. This episode is for those of you who are feeling really tired on your food peace journey. You may be working towards eating disorder recovery and feeling pretty mad about it. Pretty hopeless. Not really seeing a light at the end of the tunnel. This episode seriously is for you. Maybe you're someone who never said you experienced an eating disorder, but you feel your relationship with food has been complicated and stressful for as long as you can remember, and you just can't imagine it being any other way. Yeah, this episode's for you too. We have a letter from someone who has experienced a lot of darkness, and part of the darkness and trauma has affected their relationship with food. And I know that's something else that a lot of you can relate with.

Julie: I wanted to give a content warning as it comes to- or as it relates to rather, this letter. Um, this letter writer describes experiences that include sexual assault. So if that's something that you're not in a place really to want to listen to, or you want to just skip on over the letter for that reason and just jump into the interview, then I wanted to give you that heads up. And this is a really important letter. Again, I think the person's experiences are unique to this person, but so many of you will relate to their um, their darkness and the hard times that they're experiencing.

Julie: And I really wanted to handle this, this letter with care, and I'm so excited to have you connect with Daralyse Lyons. You may know Daralyse from her podcast called Demystifying Diversity. Um, she also has a book with the same name. She's an author and actor and an activist, and she has so much insight. You definitely want to listen to what she has to say. But before we get to the interview with Daralyse Lyons and hear this episode's letter, a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): This episode of a Love Food podcast is brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. If you have been diagnosed with PCOS, I know that you've been told you have to diet in order to manage the condition, and I don't want PCOS to be associated with that four letter word anymore. There is another way: the PCOS and Food Peace course is rooted in intuitive eating and other anti diet types of therapies that I've been practicing for 20 years now. The course is one part self study where you have 12 modules and tons of bonuses that you get to do on your own time. The other part of the course is live group coaching. Once a month you get access to me to ask all your questions, and we meet over Zoom live, and if you can't make it you can also get the recording. We also have once a month guest experts that come in the community to dig deeper into concepts that you want to explore. This is a great time to join the community

because May is the month that I turned 46. Yes, I am celebrating 46 years on this Earth! And I want to celebrate by giving you a discount. If you buy the course between May 16th and May 24th of 2021, use the coupon code BIRTHDAY at checkout and get 30% off. That's right. 30% off using the coupon- coupon code BIRTHDAY at checkout, and you can use that between May 16th and May 24th 2021. I cannot wait to see you inside. Get all the details at PCOSandFoodPeace.com, and don't forget that birthday code, birthday code? Coupon code, BIRTHDAY, to use at checkout to get 30% off.

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

Julie (as letter writer): Dear food, I don't really know exactly when my relationship became complicated with you, or quite how it came to control my life. I remember when I was in my early teens being the one to say diets are bullshit, and not thinking about what I ate. Being anti diet culture was practically a part of my identity, and such is where my value sit today. But I live in complete contradiction. At some point in my teens, I started restricting and using my vegetarianism to choose the salad option at school. But it wasn't controlling, it wasn't overwhelming. It felt more like a natural reaction to being at an all-girls school in the society that we live in: an image-based thing. Sometimes it was reactionary in spite of my well-meaning mother who would always tell me that soup is a starter, not a meal, and check if I was eating enough, despite her smaller portions. I later learned she had a struggle with anorexia for years, and would still struggle to eat in times of stress. I developed anxiety and depression by age 16, which ruled and ruined my sixth form life. Perhaps it was the exam stress, the family troubles, growing up with a drug abusing brother who was in and out of the hospital, in and out of home, and in and out of school. Not that I was always told straight away about this. We had a complex relationship with my father, who always vied for my brother's attention and allegiance against my mother. I tried to always be neutral, always loving all parties, because I was and couldn't not be. But with this came a lot of pain, a lot of confusion, and the earnest desire to always tread this precarious and often punishing line. Of course, when I couldn't, and can't today, there's guilt. I was a straight A student until the slump during my sixth form years, when my energy broke and I scrapped my way through the last two years. I used to be and still feel like I should be the person who was able to succeed at anything and everything without dropping the ball. But suddenly I could do nothing. And I have struggled ever since. Around this time I realized there was probably something wrong. A cause. Through an explosive conversation with my mother, I was pushed to a consultation with a therapist and given the diagnosis: anxiety and depression. But didn't receive further help. In my first year of uni, I tried to access help myself, but was turned away by the uni counseling services after a few sessions, saying they didn't know how to help me as I had already thought everything through so much myself. It was in this year I had a few episodes of bingeing and purging. This continued around occasional periods of stress, such as exams, but not as a regular method of coping. In second year my mental health worsened: restricting, bingeing, and purging became a secret indulgence, but never something I saw as a problem, as it was so sporadic. I had difficult relationships with my flatmates, though I had stronger relationships and friendships elsewhere. I felt alone. I became so ill, I had to defer my exams. I worked towards the summer session, hoping I could somehow manage, but two weeks before I was due to take them, I was raped. Literally broken, I moved back in with my parents for a few months, during which time I tried to use food to console myself while I tried to process what happened. But when a close family member was admitted to the hospital with terminal

cancer, I began majorly restricting. When they passed away and my family fell apart, I moved back to my uni town and started a new job, trying to get my life back on track. Pretty much all the friends I thought I had were no longer there for me. I managed to get access to CBT for nine weeks, but developed bulimia in a dramatic way, bingeing and purging at least three times a day, at one time losing X amount in a month. This continued through another exam deferral and another. I fought for a year to access treatment, being passed from waiting list to waiting list, rejected for being too symptomatic, too complicated or not fitting criteria. Along the way, I met someone who truly loves me and cares for me and helped me through these struggles. When I'm with him, I eat normally and don't purge. But still will find myself in tears most evenings because of food. My weight is stable, but I am miserable in my skin, mentally exhausted and absolutely terrified of this relationship with food that dominates my life. I cannot have food around me and resist it, regardless of whether I am hungry. I am so anxious about when I might need to eat that I'm constantly aware of a hunger and I cannot discern the emotional from the physical. I know I use bingeing and purging as both a means of occupying myself when I'm alone, as an emotional control, and as a form of self harm. And what started as a tool has grown like a weed to something that I am constantly aware of, and bothers me even when I'm happiest. I love to cook and often cook with my boyfriend but can't enjoy a meal without resenting myself and being overwhelmed with frustration as a result. In a month, I will finally be starting treatment. But I am worried about managing my relationship with food during this time, as I know it will be a gradual process and not the focus of my treatment. Additional private treatment isn't easily available for me. I am also worried about the strain I place on my boyfriend, who is always there for me, but who cannot fight the battle for me, no matter how much he may want to try. I'm trying to keep the willpower to fight for myself, to maintain the relationships I have left, and to succeed in my final chance to pass these exams in just a few months. I desperately need peace with you, food, so that I can have more energy to make peace elsewhere in my life. Yours, terrified and pleading for a truce.

Julie: Thank you so so much for this letter. Oh, I know that you expressed a lot of things that were really terrible that happened, and what's making your recovery so complicated, and just know that as I was reading your letter, I was connecting with so much that you were bringing up, and really wanted to handle it with care. And when I was reading it, I thought of Daralyse Lyons. So Daralyse Lyons is someone that I got to know through her podcast called Demystifying Diversity. She's an author, and actor, and an activist. Someone who has been exploring the nuance of diversity that includes diet culture. I again, I thought of Daralyse, I know, I just knew that she would do a really um, important job of handling it with care and helping us to just go through all the different parts of it. So let's go ahead and give Daralyse a call.

Daralyse: Hello?

Julie: Hey Daralyse, it's Julie Duffy Dillon. How are you?

Daralyse: Good. Hey Julie. How are you?

Julie: I'm great. I'm so glad to be actually talking to you live. I feel like I've gotten to know you through your podcast. So, thanks for joining me and helping me with this letter. Oh, I hope you had a chance to read through it. It was an important letter. You know?

Daralyse: I did. Thank you so much, and really thank you so much to the person who wrote in, terrified and pleading for truth. I did dive into the letter and read it and reread it a few times, and it really broke my heart, actually, like, just the struggle and the experience of being in that state of just being so self punishing and seeking escape. And it reminded me of what it used to be like when that was the way that I lived. And I just felt such a deep compassion for the person who wrote in and, and for my myself, you know, and just the struggle, the struggle of people who live in an active eating disorder. It's really hard.

Julie: Oh, that means that you like, totally handled this this letter with care. So I appreciate that. That's- whenever I read these letters, I just know they're important, and they're really from like a really important and wounded space with a person. So, I always want to handle them with a lot of care. So just even hearing your experience with it, um, makes me connect that you were handling it with care, and also um, connecting to your own lived experience, which I think is so important um, and can be like, a really great navigation and, when you were, when you were reading through this letter, what was your big picture general impression about what this person is experiencing?

Daralyse: Yeah, I mean, I think what really stood out to me, Julie, were the layers, you know, as I was reading through, like, this is a letter written to food and it was about so much more than food, right? Like, just the family dynamics and sexual abuse and trauma and anxiety and depression and just the mental and emotional anguish, and also the behavioral piece of not being able to stop this self destructive cycle, except when the, the person who wrote in, you know, is with their significant other. And I really, I mean I just related to that, like this soul, this desperate soul hunger that I tried to fill with food and then purging and the mental obsession and all of that, and at the same time, you know, for me personally with my eating disorder journey, there was a behavioral piece that was critical, you know, I couldn't heal the mental and emotional stuff that was operating beneath the surface without doing some serious work on my relationship with food in and of itself, and at the same time, you know, if I thought that it was just about the food, I was really short changing myself, like with my lived experience, and I don't know that I would have been able to have this type of sustainable recovery that I have today. So, I really, as I was reading, what stood out to me was how multi layered this is, and probably, well, I don't want to project onto the reader, but for myself, how multi layered my approach to recovery has had to be.

Julie: Yeah, how how important that was, and I think about someone who may be listening right now, who maybe has someone their life experiencing an eating disorder is- and wants to support them, but not really understanding it. Um, and of course, there are a lot of people that I'm sure you've come across in your lifetime too who don't really understand what eating disorders, um what it's like to live with that, and, you know, I don't have a lived experience recovering from an eating disorder. I feel really lucky to be able to, like sit across people for 20 years as they've shared their lived experience. Um, so I can't say I understand, but like, I'm really trying hard to, but so many people will say things like, why can't you just eat more? Or why can't you just stop doing this behavior? And the way you just described that really helped um, I think a listener to appreciate this is why, like, it's, there's so many layers to it, it's so complicated. And um, I also say that for, like, a listener who's feeling really frustrated with their recovery um, Daralyse I don't know if you ever felt that in your recovery process, like why can't I just do it differently?

Why can't I just recover? But yeah, like there- there- it's hard and it's- there's so many layers and there's so many layers of support that are needed to help to be in a place that, I don't know, just the place you want to go with it. So yeah.

Daralyse: Well, and, you know, Julie, something that stands out to me. So I work in the diversity space and where- how this translates is that, you know, I think you've met one person with an eating disorder, you've met one person with an eating disorder. I think we're all complex matrices of, you know, uh, life experiences and identity markers and different ways that our minds work and different ways that we're wired, and so in some ways, I would imagine that not being a person with an eating disorder yourself may have helped you to really just meet the person that you're sitting across from as they are and listen to what they're telling you, because I think it can be hard to make sweeping generalizations about people with any, with any sort of um, overlapping issue because, you know, what I needed for my recovery may not be what the next person needs. I think there are some commonalities, there are some, you know, we talk about an anti diet culture approach and different things that I think are kind of universally important to begin to understand and engage with. But that said, it's such a process of individual inquiry and exploration that, you know, I don't think there is, you know, just as there is not one size body, there's not one size recovery. Everybody has their own unique experience. And I think that for me, that was both terrifying and liberating to realize that, like, I was going to have to figure out what worked for me. Um, and, you know, much like a food plan, right? Like I couldn't just take someone else's way of eating and make it mine and think that somehow that was gonna work for me, like, I really needed to get to know my psyche, my body, my soul hungers, and begin to feed myself on that level, and that's- that's a lifelong journey, and it's highly individualized and I think a lot of what stood out to me about this particular reader's story is like, such good awareness, right? I mean, so much, so much insight about different elements of life and experience and yet, you know, an application gap between knowing, knowing some of the causal factors, some of the issues, but like not yet having an experience of falling in love with themselves. And um, for me, a lot of recovery is about that, it's about first, you know, stopping the behaviors that intensified the self hate, and- and then, you know, inviting myself to meet myself for the first time, perhaps ever, or, you know, for the first time since I kind of got away from myself. So it's been, it, I think it is a journey, and I think it is very, it's very unique, it's very individual. And um, yeah, and so I would invite people whether they're support people or whether they're themselves struggling with an eating disorder anywhere on the spectrum in between, like, to know, to acknowledge that what one person needs is what one person needs and, and have an authentic experience of that person, whether that's yourself or someone in your life, and really get curious about, you know, how can I support you? And again, you know, how asking that question to yourself, how can I support you myself in this recovery journey, and or how can you support, you know, how can I support the loved one in my life, and- and letting that person guide, you know, guide that, as opposed to trying to superimpose what we think we know onto ourselves or someone else.

Julie: That is so important, like, the way you're describing it, it reminds me of, like, existential types of experiences of, like, wow I have the freedom, I don't have to do recovery in this exact way, but oh goodness, like how, like, I don't have a structure to follow, because it's really gonna be the way I need it to be. Um, thank you for that. And so considering what this person shared with us in their letter, and um, you know, thinking about what you were just talking about too,

what would you recommend as someone, either the listener or- not a listener, but the letter writer or a listener who can relate to that letter, what would you recommend as some steps forward?

Daralyse: With this particular person who wrote in, I do see that, you know, they said that um, she said she's going to be starting treatment psychotherapy with a trauma focus. Um, and so I think, I think it's important that she's going to be in an environment where she can talk about some of the things and delve in emotionally. I, you know, I think it's significant to me that the letter writer spoke about how being in this loving relationship has been liberating in some ways and has allowed her, you know, she said she doesn't binge and purge when she's with her significant other and um, and why I think that's important, Julie, isn't so much, I mean, I don't believe that relationships are going to save us or anything like that, but to me, the fact that, you know, when love is present, there is not that desire to act out with food, or even if the desire is there, there's an ability to resist it, right? Like there's strength that comes from love. And so I would encourage the letter writer and anyone with an eating disorder on the, on the line, to like find things that they can either love about themselves, love about life, you know, find a higher power, a higher purpose, something that is bigger than the food, you know, something that calls to you, that nourishes you, that fills you up inside, um, in a way that food can be, well, that that can be louder, right? Than the voice of the addiction, the voice of the disease. And I think, you know, I think different people love different things, right? And it's not just about finding one thing. I mean, I think this relationship is a good start, but I don't think it's enough, you know, you know, from my own experience, having one thing has never been enough, but I had to find, you know, okay, a network of supportive people, supportive people that can love me, a- a therapist, you know, for me, I love dance, I love writing. I mean, one of the reasons I'm a writer is because I realized getting into recovery that in the absence of twelve times a day bingeing and purging, I needed something to fill that space, and I've always loved writing. You know, some people it's art, it can be music, watching TV that they love, you know, and I don't, I don't look at it so much as like coping skills or strategies or things to distract you from the food, or starvation or whatever else people do over exercise, but like, you know, finding things that really feed the soul, you know? That- that nourish you on a level of depth and a level of sustained, a sustained level, and more than just one thing, you know? Add to and add to and add to that list of things that um, that can light us up with love, and so for me, you know, that's been a very long circuitous, nonlinear journey, but it was so essential because I think deprivation, right? Like diets are all about deprivation. Um, but I think it's, it's possible even sometimes, Julie, to take that deprivation mindset into recovery and feel like, okay, I just can't use symptoms, you know? Or I just have to stop doing this, and to focus so hard on what we don't want to do that it becomes almost like myopic, right? And you can't experience what you do want. And so, it just, I don't think getting into recovery should feel like giving something up. I think for me it has to feel like being full of just something different, you know? Having something in my life that is actually more filling and more nourishing and has, you know, no side effects, where- there are no negative side effects, whereas the eating disorder, you know, it's filled a void, and so if I just take it away and I'm left with that same void, life becomes, life is horrible, right? And I don't want to be living it, so I guess that's a sort of long answer, but I would say build on the things that she loves, and definitely get some supports, which it sounds like both of those things are happening.

Julie: Yeah, yeah, there seems to be like a layer that's starting to form, or just like even an experience of something that feels like love, and the things that I remember so much about

sitting with people in the throes of an eating disorder was the connection with like that emptiness and self hatred and- and hearing you talk about falling in love with yourself, like connecting with who you were and how that takes time, and I think about how you mentioned earlier, like all these layers, like, there needs to be more than just one thing, more than just one relationship, but all these different parts to lead to that wholeness, and I hope this letter writer has space for like, just the time that it will take for that, and then also an openness. Um, and I, Daralyse said, I'm just thinking, I'm thinking about what you mentioned about like how there doesn't need to be like a deprivation, like how you're saying that like, you can use that deprivation mindset to your advantage, you know, like I'm just gonna, I'm not gonna use my behaviors right now, I'm going to avoid those. Like that was a nice kind of flip that I don't hear many people talking about. So thank you for adding it there. And those are, your insight was really important, and I hope that it helps the letter writer have some like different um, options, you know, different ways to maybe navigate the next space for themselves and um, you know, thinking about um, what this person is experiencing um, and anybody who is trying to add to um, their recovery journey, we have something on this podcast called a food peace syllabus, which is a collection of resources that we've been building since the Love Food podcast began that help with the recovery journey, and you can get to it at juliedillonrd.com/foodpeacesyllabus. Daralyse, would you like to add anything to it?

Daralyse: Yeah, so I would say that you spoke about insights, and my experience of recovery has been that I had to get out of my head and like, into my life and into my body and, and not in my body in a way that was, because it's very physical, right, Julie? Like the binging and the purging and the serving and the over exercising, like it's a very embodied kind of thing, but I had to have a new experience of sort of dropping out of my mind and into my self into- into my life. And so I guess that I would encourage people to think about in terms of like resources or in terms of things that they could do um, to just like find one thing that calls to you, whatever it is, whether it's listening to music, you know, and for me, I remember early on in my recovery I would put on, you know, a three minute song and just dance around my living room. You know, that the best I could do. I would meditate for like two minutes and I would cry the entire time. And so, if- I would just, I think anything can be a positive recovery resource if it's something that you love, something that feeds you up, or feeds your soul, something that you know, has only positive consequences. I think, I think that can be something to build on. So I would encourage people to do that um, for sure. And then uh, and also, you know, it's funny right, because I talked about adding and not depriving, but something else to think about is really, you know, if you want to be in recovery, if I want to be in recovery, it's also important for me to look at the things that I am consuming in terms of like, media, and in terms of um, you know, just like things I was subscribed to, like I was subscribed to a bazillion newsletters about dieting and fitness, you know, all these things and I, and so for me it was really important to unsubscribe to those things to not be- I mean Instagram wasn't such a big thing when I was getting into recovery but maybe you know to like, be conscious of who I follow and who I like and where I spent my time. Because you know, if I was, as I was trying to learn to love and inhabit my body, I couldn't keep- I just couldn't keep focusing on my previous standards of what uh, a happy life was supposed to look like, or what a you know, a healthy body was supposed to look like, I had to kind of start from, start from scratch.

Julie: Mhm. Yeah. You know those newsletters? Those email newsletters have been the like, just a little tap on the shoulder for so many people to move away from their recovery, you know? And I'm recalling conversations with people who were you know, feeling fuller in the way that you're describing. And then lo and behold this random email would come in, and it was you know, for some diet company or some influencer trying something, and it just was like a tap on the shoulder that like really um, caused a pivot that they didn't want to go in, you know, but it's, it's, as much as you can have like a boundary in that area, I think unsubscribing is so powerful, and it seems so small but it's huge, you know?

Daralyse: Yeah, it's totally huge. I used to experience, I used- I used to feel like I got hijacked by the disease, like, I had a lot of relapses early on in my recovery and, and throughout, like, I'd have, you know, years in recovery, and then I'd have a relapse and then years, you know, recovered and then relapse then. And so yeah, for me, it's just this, this consciousness, this awareness that, you know, there's something about my neural pathways or my emotional wiring or whatever it is, the level of sensitivity, a level of openness. I mean, the reader talked about this in their letter, like, just wanting to love all people and, you know, like, I don't know, I think there was a huge, I just am such a heartfelt person, and so something would happen and it would, it would just sort of take over and the eating disorder would take hold of me before I even knew what was happening, and then I found myself bingeing and purging, or I'd realized that I'd been over exercising and, you know, so, yeah, I think really doing what we can to minimize the external forces that are likely to draw us back into the disease, and to maximize the things that are going to keep us in recovery externally, but then also know that, you know, the vast majority of the work is internal, it's not, you know, it's not just about these external things.

Julie: Yeah, yeah, it reminds me how um, recovery, part of what makes it complicated, just part of it, is that the world hasn't even acknowledged its own eating disorder, its own relationship with food and how diet culture is so pervasive and just moving through the world unchecked, you know, and um, and I appreciate your podcast, how it explores so much nuance, and um uh, your podcast is Demystifying um Diversity, right? And um, uh the episode where you got a chance to connect with Dani Adriana was the one where I was like, oh yes, there's actually a discussion on weight with diversity, this is so amazing. So um, I appreciate you bringing that in just now and also like, in your work um, with diversity including body size and diet culture, acknowledging all of that um, has such a big part of it, you know, and no wonder this, this, this process is so complicated. I didn't even think about too, or don't even acknowledge too like how capitalism is a part of diet culture too and how that, those newsletters that we get randomly, how that's why they're there suddenly, you know, some- somebody's in promoting some kind of diet for a reason, it makes money, and um anyway, um I appreciate your work so much and um, if someone wants to know more about you and your work, where's the best place for them to go?

Daralyse: Absolutely. Um, so they can subscribe to the Demystifying Diversity podcast anywhere they get or listen to podcasts. They can also visit the Demystifying Diversity podcast website, which is just demystifyingdiverstypodcast.com, and find links to all episodes and resources. Or they can connect with me personally at DaralyseLyons.com. And yeah, all of those are great ways to connect and engage. And I'm always so grateful when people reach out. I really take the time to answer every email and every- every voicemail, everything, all of it. So I love to hear from people.

Julie: Well and I hope it's not a surprise to a listener, but before someone says hello on the recording, I actually have talked to them for a little bit, and so when we were talking before we pushed record um, you know, the way you were describing the interviews for the podcast and how then that was turned into a book. It's like, it sounds so thoughtful and an awareness of like, so much nuance and then also um, holding onto the story and really giving the space for the story to be shared. So, um, I appreciate all that. And, and um, I look forward to reading your book, because that, that seems like, especially as a listener who, if they listen to the podcast and they want to know more, they want to hear more of the nuance and hear more of the story. I know um, the way you're describing it I'm like, oh, that sounds so wonderful. So.

Daralyse: I'm glad you mentioned the book because I did not, but I wrote a book called *Demystifying Diversity: Embracing Our Shared Humanity*. And there's also a workbook that you can get with that.

Julie: Oh, good!

Daralyse: Um, and there is a, there is a specific section in the book that does focus on the body diversity episode that we did and those stories and those voices, and that also has like a workbook section where it gives people things that they can do to dismantle their own internalized bias and to um, to really push back against diet culture in a way that's empowering and individualized and nuanced and kind of allows them to choose a place to start because I think like, oh my God, you know, the suppression of self is just culturally rampant, food is one piece of that, but there are so many other ways that we're taught that it's not okay to be who we are in this world, and I have found that the greatest healing, the greatest liberation for myself and for those that I've worked with and spoken to has been to find a way to be authentic, you know, and- and to start somewhere, to start that authenticity journey somewhere, and often body reclamation as a part of that, you know, like we can't live our authentic lives when we're in an inauthentic body.

Julie: Yes. Oh, yeah, and connecting with that is going to be tough at times because how the world is currently set up, right? So, um, and it may take time to connect with all those things that you learned that you love about yourself. You know, all those different layers. Uh-

Daralyse: Well and as those letters happen, we find like the people, like I can't even tell you, Julie, how my life is so different, my friendships, my family relationships, you know, and not everything, it's not perfect. I don't mean, you know, I have not arrived anywhere. And the more authentic and the more authentically self expressed I become, the more I start to draw similar people to me, and people who think like I do. I mean, when I was in active restriction, that was all I thought about, and I didn't want anyone, you know, telling me other things. But today in my life, I don't, I don't think I have anyone in my life today who's on a diet, you know? Like I just don't, that's just not part of my fear, you know? So yeah, I think it- I think the society that we're a part of also shifts as we shifts. We get linked into new communities.

Julie: Yes. Oh, that's so awesome. The way you're describing that too, I know it's not like this arrival point, you know? But it sounds really, it sounds accessible and hopeful, the way you're describing it.

Daralyse: Yeah.

Julie: So I hope that um, a listener can connect with that too.

Daralyse: And it is accessible. Like I, we didn't talk about this part of my story, but I've been institutionalized sixteen times for anorexia and bulimia. Like I, there is no way that I should be able to function in society as I do. And yet it's been eleven years since my last, I was last in a treatment facility, and I live a wonderful life today that reflects who I am at my core, and that's full of love and includes no self destructive eating behaviors and no overexercising. You know, just, I'm just like a free person today, and I never believed, I couldn't go, you know, two hours without binging and purging, let alone, you know, days and years and weeks and months. So there is absolutely hope. There is totally hope and freedom available to people.

Julie: I'm not going to deny, there's a little bit of like, mist in my eyes right now, because I know, I know some people who listen to this, this podcast who can relate to the number of times that you required hospitalization or you, you were receiving treatment at a higher level of care. And that, that experience of like, there's just no way I'm ever going to recover um, hearing someone else who's been in the same place, again, I'm like, there's a little mist in my eyes right now, because I know it's going to be um, important to someone listening. Oh my gosh, I just, I so appreciate your time. It's so nice to get to know you and more about your work. Um, and your lived experience. I, it's, I feel um honored to have learned about what you've experienced and to like hear it, and I know it's going to help someone listening. So, so thank you so much.

Daralyse: Thank you so much, Julie, and thanks to everyone who's listening, and thank you so much too terrified and pleading for a truce.

Julie: So there you have it. Letter writer, I hope my conversation that I had with Daralyse Lyons was helpful to you. I feel so grateful that I got to hear Daralyse's experiences in recovery, and like I said, I did get a misty eyed because I know there are so many people listening, and I wonder if you're one of them, who just feels so far from experiencing freedom from the grips of an eating disorder and diet culture. I hope it gives you that hope that I was just connecting with, listening to what she was saying.

Julie (ad break): I see that food has written back, but before we get to food's letter, this episode of a Love Food podcast was brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course And to celebrate my birthday, I am giving you 30% off using the coupon code BIRTHDAY at checkout. It's going to be 30% off on May 16 through May 24, and again, go to pcosandfoodpeace.com and use coupon code BIRTHDAY at checkout.

Julie: If you enjoyed this episode of the Love Food podcast, I would love it if you left a rating, a review, subscribed, or shared an episode. Doing any of those acts of kindness really helps the

show grow. And I am sending you so much thanks in advance. All right, enough of all that. Let's go ahead and here food's letter. But until next time, take care.

Julie (as food): Dear terrified and pleading for a truce, We have traveled far together. The layers to our journey have darkness, and we have some light. As you navigate this loving relationship in trauma treatment, consider what it would be like to add more layers to your understanding of yourself. What if you added more of what brings you joy, enthusiasm, connection, or calm? What if you added boundaries to what fed the self destruction? Unsubscribed to the messages encouraging emptiness? We are hopeful moving forward as we feed the possibilities for recovery and you falling in love with you. 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.