

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 247 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. How is your journey going? Well, if you are new to the Love Food podcast, we talk about helping to recover from diet culture and eating disorders, all using intuitive eating types of philosophies and techniques. And we also get a letter from listeners who are hoping to get some insight in their part of the food peace journey. They're needing some extra help along the way. Today's letter comes from someone who says they are not going to give up. They know they're not going to give up, but there is a but: they're tired and they're stuck. So, I invited Katie Barbaro who is the author of the illustrated guide to food freedom called *Fed Up*. It is such a fun read, I highly recommend it. And Katie has um, some really great insight from her own lived experience that I think for the letter writer and for anyone who can relate to this part of the food peace journey, I think you're going to find some new wisdom and insight. But before we get to this episode's letter and hear from Katie, a word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): This episode of a Love Food podcast is brought to you by Ovo Folic. What is Ovo Folic? Well, I had that question too, but Ovo Folic is a new to me inositol supplement. If you have PCOS and you have listened to podcasts on PCOS that I've been interviewed on, or you have done my course, you know that I talk all the time about inositol supplementation. We know that people with PCOS probably have a defect or deficiency with certain inosotols, and that's what leads to insulin resistance, issues with ovulation, and higher androgen levels. Adding an inositol supplement to your PCOS regimen is something that for many people, helps to improve ovulation, lower androgens, and lower insulin blood sugars, and even improve symptoms of anxiety. Recently I jumped on the phone with Dr. Pari, one of the founders of the small company called Elan Healthcare that makes Ovo Folic. She also sent me samples to try. I was so impressed with all that Elan Healthcare is doing. It's a small women owned and led company, not a big corporation. They love providing a personal touch. Dr. Pari responds to all customer emails herself. She also oversees every aspect of the manufacturing and the ingredients of of Ovo Folic. So I know not all in inositol ingredients are the same. I really like knowing there's a choice in good quality inositol supplements with the recommended 40:1 ratio. Ovo Folic has no taste or smell. I can totally vouch for that, because I tried it myself, and of course has these really high quality ingredients. Ovo Folic comes in easy to carry single dose packets with, again, that 40 to 1 ratio so you can feel rest assured that you're getting the recommended amount for the maximum therapeutic effect. So, Ovo Folic has a special offer for Love Food listeners. Use the coupon code `foodpeace` at checkout for 15% off. Go to Elanhealthcare.ca and click on their product, Ovo Folic. It's spelled O V O F O L I C, to learn more. Use code `foodpeace`, all one word, to get 15% off.

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

Julie: Dear food, Our love and hate relationship has been ebbing and flowing. It all started really innocently wanting to opt for healthier options until it led me to an unhealthy place. A place where I feared you. A place where I felt guilty after eating you, and a place that took away all the pleasure and freedom around guilt. I've been recovering from an eating disorder for almost two years now, and although our relationship is relatively better, we could say that we are not in peace yet. Diet culture has made me believe there are bad and good foods, that I should fear some of you, that some of you are evil. I really want to change that. I want to make peace with you. I'm trying to unlearn all the lies and myths diet culture has taught me, but it's hard, you know? I've been trying really hard to break [inaudible] diets, the mentality of good and bad, and surround myself with anti diet body positivity and food freedom content. But I'm struggling to take action steps to have a better relationship with you. It's easy to consume and motivate me with a lot of inspiring content, but it's overwhelming, you know? I mean, there are so many fear foods I need to face, unlearn diet myths, change my mentality around food, learn to brush off diet comments, re-learn how to listen to my body and treat it with respect, and so much more than I need to do. I don't even know where to start. Also, I'm afraid I feel alone and I'm afraid of what will happen if I let go of control and food restriction. I really want to have a better relationship, but things like diet culture, fear of weight gain, or eating disorder thoughts get in the way. I won't give up. I am positive I will get to a place where I no longer fear you, but embrace you. I know I will get there one day. This girl needs a little guidance. Love, not giving up.

Julie: You have come so far, letter writer, and I know you're going in the direction you want to go, but feeling probably really exhausted. I want to help you to continue on. And I'm inviting a guest to help: Katie Barbaro. She is the author of a really wonderful illustrated guide to food freedom called *Fed Up*. It is so lovely. Especially if you have lots- read lots of books to help with your eating disorder recovery and need something different. The fact that it is illustrated the whole way through makes it so fabulous. But after I read it, I knew that I wanted to have her on the Love Food podcast, and I think she's gonna have a lot of insight into your letter because of what I read in this book and her lived experience. So, let's go ahead and give Katie a call.

Katie: Hello?

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

Katie: Hey Julie, I'm great. How are you?

Julie: I'm really glad to be talking to you. Thank you for agreeing to help me answer this letter. Did you get a chance to read over it?

Katie: I did. I did read over it. Thank you for sending it to me.

Julie: Well, I think your book is so lovely. And when I read through this letter, I knew that you would have some really um, important words of wisdom. So, that's why I picked this letter for

you. And when you read through this letter, what's your- what's your general impression about what this person is experiencing?

Katie: Oh, well, my general impression is, I just feel like this is like, this is me from the past talking to me now. Like, not going to quit. I want to just tell you that where you are is so, like, I'm just- I just want to surround you in a bubble of love and affirmation that you're on the right track. Like, the whole experience of deconstructing our subconscious limiting beliefs around food around our bodies. Like, this is a messy process. And if it was, like, an overnight thing, you'd probably be in major denial. So, the first thing I wanted to say is that the fact that you're writing this letter about just honestly being where you are is, like, the most compassionate thing you could be doing for yourself. Like admitting where you're afraid, and where there's, you know, these creeping beliefs still coming into play. Like, I just want to affirm that that is a sign that you're actually, you know, you're doing this work and you're doing a great job.

Julie: Yeah, I agree. You know, there's a lot of, of the process of recovery that is so incredibly fucked up and messy, you know, and I have witnessed a lot of people in that process kind of wanting to be like, I'm fine, I'm fine, I'm fine, but I agree with you that this person was like, this is a, this is where I am, um, and owning it and not really hiding from it, you know, and um, there's something really important about that- that spot to be in versus like, you know, let's just keep putting that shit under the rug. So, um, I agree with you. And so, when you were reading through it, what would you recommend to someone who's in a similar place, or maybe even the letter writer as some steps forward when they're recognizing, you know, they're coming along and they're not going to give up, but this is like, exhausting. What would you recommend to them as some, some ways to move forward?

Katie: Yes, I- I felt a lot of like, how would I call it? I think even, even just the name of like, I'm not going to quit, like I'm not going to give up food, I promise, I'm going to keep working. I'm gonna keep fighting. And that really lit something up in me, whereas like actually, what is like, I guess this is a question to you or to anybody, you know, to this letter writer, or to anybody who feels like they're in this position, or is like "I'm trying so hard and it's just not working." And instead of focusing on not giving up, what are some of the things that you need to give up? Like starting with that question. What do I need to give up to move forward with more gentleness and compassion with myself in this process? And like, some things that come to mind from my own journey are like, I need to give up on getting it right. I have some idea in my mind that recovery is supposed to look like how it looks for all of these amazing people I follow on Instagram, or recovery is supposed to, you know, seem like chapter 10 of the book *Intuitive Eating*, you know, I'm supposed to get somewhere. And when we approach recovery like that, it has a lot of the same aspects of dieting. Like when I'm approaching my journey as a destination, it's like, oh I'm gonna- I'll be happy when I get to a place of complete food freedom and peace, and that place looks like X, Y and Z. So, my invitation to anyone who feels like this is, what if you gave up? Gave up on getting it right, gave up on recovering the same way that other people do, or for your story to look like you think it's supposed to look?

Julie: Mhm, I like that a lot. Like there's- you're kind of like, provoking this like spin in my head that feels really refreshing to think about um, coming in from this, this different angle. And I'm I'm thinking about that and um, something- I don't know if you know this about me, Katie, but

I'm not someone who's experienced an eating disorder, but I've sat across people for over twenty years now um, with them along that recovery experience. And what I've noticed for so many people is that in the beginning it will feel so much like that. Like this black and white kind of way of defining this is what getting better is going to look like, and yeah, like that getting better was just like another like, way of um, expressing diet culture, because that's like the lens of everything. You know, we can't see just, it's so hard to like remove that lens for like, anything. But as people like, call that out, you know, calling diet culture out as like such a huge system that um, is this lens, and move away from it more frequently. It seems like a year or two will go by in that messy place and then people are like, wait, I think this is how I'm experiencing the recovery process. Like it's not like this like destination, but of like, this is it. This is it. You know? Like I'm living my life and yeah, they're still messy sometimes. But like, this is, this, I'm connecting to the things I wanted to connect with, but it was not, I guess what I'm trying to say, it's more like a hindsight kind of thing, instead of like, I'm here!

Katie: Yes!

Julie: I don't know if you experience it that way, but as you were talking about that, that was something that I was connecting with too that, like, it- for many people in- in earlier recovery kind of spaces, it'll feel like "I'm just going to know when I'm there" and it's going to be like, I get this blue ribbon or something, but it's not that exact, you know?

Katie: Yes, yes, yes, yes. To everything you're saying, and it's like letting go, I really like to say, let go of getting there and arrive here. Like, right here, this is the story that you are living right now, is your recovery story. The fact that you want to recover, or like, you know, that's- because recovery is making the choice, that's how it feels. Um, like, being, having been on the inside of a brain that has an eating disorder voice and has a- a recover- recovery voice, like the voice that wants- that really wants what's really best for me, and then the voice that thinks self-sabotage is going to manipulate life into giving me what I want, like a better body or some sort of, you know, like better body is such a ridiculous phrase in and of itself, but like, this- all of these delusions that my self sabotage eating disorder voice had, um like, just choosing being the one who can observe both of those voices and say "I'm going to keep listening to the recovery voice, I'm going to keep listening to that", that choice is all it takes to recover. I mean, it's not saying recovery is simple, but it's like, giving yourself more credit of, like, if you are on a path of recovery, like this is your story, you're living it right now, and this took me a long time to understand myself. And it's part of the reason why I felt so moved to write my story in a book, and it's this kind of, it's very much like you're in the- in my head because I was like, oh, if I thought all this time, I thought I wasn't getting it right at each of these stages of recovery, like, I just want everyone else to feel like you are not alone. And I think that's something this letter writer said, "I feel alone and I'm afraid of what will happen if I let go of the control." Like these remaining vestiges of that eating disorder brain, and I just want to validate and affirm that you are not, you're not alone in any of this. And that yeah, I think what's just really important is like, realizing that you're on, like, you're in recovery by choosing to be in recovery. That's it, that's all it takes. There's no requirement, there's no, like you said, we're so used to measurements to like, how much do I weigh? What's my BMI? What, how much- like, how many carbs that I have for breakfast? Like, when we're in that mentality, it's hard to break free of that and be like, oh, what? There are no external measures for what recovery looks like? It's something that happens inside

of me? It's organic. It's like, it's a totally different measuring stick in that there is no measurement of it. It's um, yeah, I don't know. That's my best way of describing it, even though it's kind of a illusory thing.

Julie: Yeah, it's like strange to try to even describe with words, but I'm totally with you on it for sure. And you mentioned about like, the loneliness that people describe in the recovery process and um, that's something I heard from every single person I've talked to in their eating- eating disorder recovery experiences. They just felt so alone. And I would often tell my clients like, I wish you could be like a fly on the wall and we didn't have HIPA. So you could just like listen to what all my other clients are saying, because they're saying the same thing, like, you know, you're not alone. And that's why I wanted to make this podcast, because I was like, people need to know that like, you all are like, everybody has a different story and experience and different um, a different body. So, they're gonna experience recovery different- differently. And um, there's these themes that so many people are talking about and feels ashamed about. So um, yes, letter writer, and anyone who can relate, you are not alone, and I just really like the way you summed that up, that, like, just choosing recovery is recovery. Like that's- that's all you need, that's all you need to do. And um and then, you know, it, it will move in the direction that it needs to go. So, I almost can feel like, shame being removed from shoulders as they're listening to what you're talking about, Katie. So, I appreciate it. And um, we need to move on to the, to the next step. But I want- before we do, I want to make sure that if there's any other kind of steps or pointers or anything that you want to mention before we move on? Or are you ready to go to the next step?

Katie: Oh, um yeah, I just wanted to say like, I wanted to name this, because sometimes giving a label to something can be helpful, and what I would give this stage, which feels super natural and normal, is this, like, it feels to me like a self-love purgatory, where you know, you're not in the fullest expression of self love yet, but there's like, but you're definitely- you like transitioned away from the eating disorder and you're like, not quite in the, like, self love ocean yet. And you're just in the self love purgatory. So, I wanted to offer that in case it resonates with anybody who's in that sort of middle phase. Um, just to put some images and words to that feeling.

Julie: That's cool. You know, even that word purgatory, it reminds me of, of your book and some of the images and um, I know you, even on the cover, I'm looking at um, I don't know if this is the cover you're going with, but the diet culture purgatory. I love it. I love the imagery that you're using and well, this is like a really good segue to the next portion of the Love Food podcast where we talk about the food peace syllabus. Um, and if you're new to the Love Food podcast, the food peace syllabus is a collection of resources that we've been gathering um, over the last five years that we hope help give you insight or strength or encouragement along your food peace journey. And you can get to their most recent copy if you go to juliedillonrd.com/freebies. And I'm hoping, Katie, you want to add your book to it, but I just wanna make sure.

Katie: Oh, thank you for asking. Yes, I would be so honored to add *Fed Up: An Illustrated Guide to Food Freedom* to the book, or to the, yeah, to the syllabus. Um.

Julie: Yes, we're going to add it for sure. I was going to add it whether you wanted me to or not, but tell us about the book and you know, how you came to, because it is different. I um, read a

lot of manuscripts, and I was like, oh, this is refreshing, it's completely different. And just even how it's illustrated.

Katie: Yeah, thank you. Yeah, it's a very um, it kind of might feel like you're reading my diary, it's a recovery memoir. So, I kind of going off the whole theme of the episode, um, I felt really compelled and almost like I didn't have a choice in sharing my story around recovery because mm, there are so many nuances of like, this journey. And like you said, like, I- I also felt like, oh my god, if I felt this alone, other people might feel that way too. And so, my intention was to create a, um you know, just an opportunity to dump my heart and brain onto- into a book and be like, okay, this is like, real talk. No, I'm not keeping anything hidden. This is like, these are my um, you know, the life behind the veil of recovering from not just disordered eating, but also just the residual diet culture-y, thoughts, um, any limiting beliefs that were holding me back from being who I really am, and I really wanted to share that with other people because we are not alone. You're not alone.

Julie: Totally, totally. You know, and reading the book is fun to me, like that's the difference. And um, to like, there's- there's many wonderful books out there that provide um, important insight and um, encouragement, but having just a different way to express it, again. I don't know if fun is the word. A lot of people [inaudible] because of the topic, but it was just different and fun in that way because of how you like, brought it, you know, brought it out and how it's um, how it's illustrated. Like I said. So I just think that's really cool, and I think um, for those who are like blah about another book, this is something different. And I encourage you to check it out. So, thank you for um, birthing this book.

Katie: Thank you so much Julie. That means a lot. If- fun is a great word to describe it if you- that's a- I feel very honored to have that as your takeaway reflection.

Julie: Good, good. Um, and if someone wants to pre order, because I know- if someone's listening to this um, live, it may not be exactly ready to come to the world, but um, where can people go to pre order it?

Katie: Sure, you can visit thefedupbook.com and learn a little bit more about the book, and there's links to the pre order page, which is, yeah, that's also at orchardpress.com/shop.

Julie: Awesome. Thank you.

Katie: Thank you.

Julie: So, if people want to connect with you, find out more about you, where can people go?

Katie: Yeah, I love to connect with people on Instagram. You could find me @thefedupbook or my personal Instagram is @katiebarb, and I'm active on both. Um, that's a great place to find me, or my website, katiebarbaro.com. I just gave you a lot of URLs, but somewhere on the internet we will find each other. Yes.

Julie: Exactly, and whatever preference you like. Um, and I will of course put that in the show notes too if you're not able to catch all that, it is there for you to have as a reference. Hey Katie, thank you so much for spending time with me to go through this letter. I really appreciate your insight and your expertise, and I hope you have a great day.

Katie: Thank you so much, Julie. This was really fun.

Julie: So there you have it. Letter writer, I hope my conversation with Katie Barbaro was helpful to you as you are examining where you are on your food peace journey. We believe in you, and remember you are not alone. I see food has written back.

Julie (ad break): Before we hear food's letter, this episode of the Love Food podcast was brought to you by Ovo Folic. Ovo Folic is a new way to get inositol supplementation for those of you with polycystic ovarian syndrome. Would you like 15% off? Just for Love Food listeners, go to elanhealthcare.ca/discount/foodpeace. There's also a link in the show notes. Remember, Elan is spelled E L A N, and it's elanhealthcare.ca/discount/foodpeace.

Julie: If you enjoyed this episode of the Love Food podcast, I would love it if you left a rating, a review, if you subscribed or shared an episode. Doing any of those four acts of kindness really does help the show grow. We want more people to connect with food peace, because the more people that connect with it, the more we can help other people reject diet culture and experience body liberation. So again, thank you in advance for doing any of those acts of kindness so other people can find the show.

Julie: All right. Like I said, food has written back, but until next time, take care.

Julie (as food): Dear not giving up, we see you in this messy space and so proud. You've been choosing recovery more and more often, but we know you feel stuck sometimes, wondering if you're doing things correctly. What if you consider what you need to give up to move along? Perfectionism, check. Doing it "right"? Check. Remember, no matter what, you are not alone. Many fellow food peace travelers are taking those same exact steps. 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.