

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 249 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 say you are stuck. You may even say the word, I'm "ambivalent" about this process. I have been exploring intuitive eating, but it doesn't seem like a good fit for me, but diets aren't working either, so what the fuck am I supposed to do? Yeah, this episode is for you. I know a lot of people are in this place. This is a place that some people can be stuck in literally for decades and it happens to also be the most exhausting space. This is a solo episode where I'm going to sift through this place on the food peace journey. So of course, I have a letter today from someone in this space, but before we get to this episode's letter, 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 inositols, 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 Ovo Folic. So I know not all 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 (as letter writer): Dear food, I have had a complicated relationship with you for most of my adult life. Growing up, you were part of celebrations and parties and could serve as comfort during the loss of a loved one. When I got out on my own, you definitely shifted to comfort as I was in a complicated situation and food seemed to soothe me/make me feel better. What I did not like was the weight gain that came with quote “all that comfort”. I got married, joined a commercial weight loss program, and lost a significant amount of weight, felt good about myself. Others validated me in my efforts, but it was freaking hard to keep up. This new body found that I was in so many unhealthy habits, crept up in an effort to show up on the scale and see what I deemed to be the prize number at the time. I yo-yoed over the years, and if we fast forward to now, I have put on weight and way more now than I ever have weighed in the past. I saw a counselor for a few sessions and they introduced me to the book *Intuitive Eating*, but it never really took off for me. I love one of the authors. I watched and listened to so many interviews with her. She is fabulous and that laugh is contagious. I don't know if it was because the counselor was not well versed in intuitive eating or if I wasn't ready for at the time. I don't know. But I can tell you that I'm super unhappy in my current state. I've had to repurchase my wardrobe to accommodate my bigger self. I get frustrated during some workouts as I've had to modify some of the moves, but I'm also humbled because I used to do this in the past with no problem. I love to scrapbook, but do not have many pictures of myself for the past year or if I do, they are creatively cropped to not show how much I have gained. How do I balance you? I've tried restriction in the past are putting limits on myself and then that did not go well. How do I get back to a place where I'm comfortable around you and ultimately with myself? - Struggling with Food Peace

Julie: Hey, letter writer, I appreciate your note and I can feel, oh, I can feel so intensely your ambivalence. And I know someone else listening is in this similar place where they have tried and tried to make intuitive eating work, or maybe they read it or heard about it, and it just didn't feel like something for them yet. Diets haven't worked either, they've only caused more problems. So, what the fuck are you supposed to do? So, I really am excited to dig through this and sift through some things. And again, I'm picking up on the ambivalence, and this is a place where I've noticed people can stay for years, and at the same time it's exhausting. Like, this is the most exhausting part of the food peace journey, and unfortunately, you can get stuck there. So, let's help you get unstuck. And I'm- I'm appreciating that as we kind of sit with this ambivalence, it may bring on some discomfort for you, letter writer, or anyone listening who can relate to what we're talking about today. So, notice that discomfort and push pause when you need to.

Julie: But I want to start with the beginning, you know, food at one point, until really, adult times, it sounds like, letter writer. Food was neutral. It was fun. It was comfortable. It was comforting until it wasn't. I am so curious as to why it shifted. Why did it shift? You mentioned a complicated situation and you were going out on your own. I would really encourage you to be curious as to what shifted then. You noted in your letter that that's when the soothing became an issue. Yet, what- what if the judgment is the issue, not the soothing? And I don't necessarily mean your judgment, rather the world's normalizing of the judgment, the world normalizing using food to soothe, and weight change that can happen during this time. What if that's the issue?

Julie: Let's spend a few minutes talking about the current norms, like the current state of affairs with how we relate to food. And I say "we" meaning like, collectively those of us who are living amongst diet culture, which I'm assuming is just about everyone, if not everyone listening right now to this podcast. Current norms is that stress eating is a sign of individual weakness, and that we must stop it. If we're able to stop it and eat less, then that means we got our shit together. Or as what I lovingly call GST. If you eat less and then also weigh less, then it's an obvious validated sign of GST. And you know, letter writer, you said this was validated for you, as you started to eat less and your body got smaller, your community validated your existence, gave you lots of warm fuzzies and high fives and hugs, gave you lots of congratulations for all your hard work, your individual strength. And I have a feeling in the process, it opened doors, it made your voice have more power. So like I mentioned, these are current norms. This is a cycle that people are experiencing all over the world all the time. Some people on repeat over and over again. Again, it's- it's turning inward to what someone is considering to be an individual weakness, and then getting smaller, and getting it validated that now you have more power, now you are acceptable. But what is actually the reality? Because again, I think people are currently in this loop and again, for- for their whole life at times, in this loop of looking inside, and thinking that they're doing things wrong and fixing it, when in reality, what I know to be true is that stress eating or emotional eating, whatever you want to call it, stress eating is a normal coping skill that has existed for thousands of years that has been twisted by diet culture. And remember, if you listen to this podcast before, we have to acknowledge that diet culture has its roots in white supremacy.

Julie: If this is news to you, well, welcome to this connection, it'll help explain to you why it feels so hard to move along the food peace journey, especially in times of ambivalence because we can all acknowledge white supremacy is some heavy shit. If you want to know more, one of my favorite places to start was- is with Sonya- Sonya Renee Taylor's book, *The Body is not an Apology*. If you want to dig even deeper, read Dr. Sabrina Strings' book, *Fearing the Black Body*. It will give you so much in this, in this area of connecting diet culture to white supremacy and also acknowledging how this is something that is outside of you and me.

Julie: So, remember, we're talking about reality, and stress eating is a normal coping skill that's been twisted by diet culture. When we notice the changes in behavior, when we notice the changes in stress eating and seeking more and more comfort with food, and noticing the changes in body size, this will trigger discomfort because of how it's connected to the risk of the loss of privilege. We want to belong. We want to be accepted. We want people to believe in us and care for us, and we want to feel at home in our body. Of course we want that. We're humans. On a subconscious, and sometimes conscious level, we connect with the fact that people in larger bodies are going to experience less acceptance. I know that's not news to you. Something really important that I want to just name before shame from a different avenue starts pouring in, wanting to belong and have access and privilege doesn't make you bad. It just makes you human. And so, considering comfort eating, stress eating, emotional eating, and noticing these behavior changes, and wanting to take up less space and change these behaviors will definitely give us temporary belonging. The world will notice. It'll validate how amazing this is. But something I know is that's just temporary, because we still have the stressor, and now you've just added this weight cycling or the yo-yo dieting. You just added another variable that's adding stress physiologically and psychologically to your lived experience.

Julie: Something I'm appreciating for you, letter writer, and for so many people who are in this constant loop of trying to prove that you've got your shit together, you've got that GST, is that eventually there is this moment of feeling like you're waking up, that diets don't work for you. But this food peace experience doesn't feel right either. And again, this is where I see you stuck. Naming it as ambivalence, I think can be really powerful, because again, whenever you can take the blame off your individual experiences, I think is really powerful on the food peace journey. But what do you do? What do you do in this moment?

Julie: What I propose is, let's rally to make a new norm. We can do this, right? We can come together and make some new norms as it can- it relates to food. Let's make a norm: stress eating is normal. It already is. So let's just make it normal. Stress eating, emotionally eating, eating to soothe and feel comfort in times of stress, is and always will be normal. I hope we can just name it as such. And when we are trying to stop it, what are we really afraid of losing? In those moments when you're connecting to using food as a coping mechanism, and you start to feel that shame, and you start to have that kind of twinkle of an idea, that sort of fantasy that is so seductive of changing behavior and losing weight. In that moment, if there's a way you can pause, or pause as quickly as you can as you're getting swept up into that seductive fantasy, really pause and consider, what am I afraid of losing? I'm going to guess its acceptance, safety, belonging, access, privilege, or it may even be, what do we crave more of? What do we want more of in our life? And it may be those things. It may be access, safety, belonging, privilege. That doesn't make us bad, that again, that makes us human.

Julie: A new norm that I wish we could all get behind is that when we are stressed, when we are needing comfort and we reach for food, when we're stress eating, when we are fearing this loss of privilege, we still have our shit together. We still have that GST. Stress eating and wanting to be validated by the community is not a failure. It's just being human.

Julie: Let's take it a step further. Noticing the craving to pull away from food peace not only brings in more weight cycling, remember weight cycling is something that contributes to more oxidative stress on your body, it promotes more psychological stress as well, and it's just the end result of a diet cycle for most people. So noticing the craving to pull away from food peace not only brings more of this weight cycling, yet it also contributes to more anti fat bias, because we're all connected, we are all connected. So the choices that we make at an individual level affect all of us. Again, I point to Sonya Renee Taylor's work in this area. I really appreciate how she has helped me to understand how food behavior is a collective, it's not just individual behavior, and only thinking of these behaviors as individual choices contributes to that norm-ing of that cycle that I mentioned in the beginning. Every time that we think, oh my gosh, I don't have my shit together because I'm stress eating and I'm gaining weight, it contributes to validating the current norms that stress eating or comfort eating as a sign of weakness that we must stop, and those that weigh less and eat less are the- are the winners. When in reality, that is not the truth.

Julie: The more you continue on your food peace journey, the more that you work to reject diet culture and notice how it has been formed by the evils of like, white supremacy, misogyny, all those things that are so powerful and hurting so many people, the more you can keep on your

food peace journey, you will help everyone else on their own. That is so powerful. And I hope it helps to contribute to rocking that ambivalence, letter writer, that you're experiencing, that you choosing to continue to reject diets even when it's uncomfortable, how you are going to help other people along the way. The more we connect with and work through our own anti fat bias that lives in our body, the less of it that is going to be in the world. I propose that we make one new norm together. Let's acknowledge that you don't have to have your shit together. We as individuals don't have to have our shit together. Yet, let's demand the world gets its shit together. Let's acknowledge white supremacy. Let's acknowledge anti fat bias, and let's rally together to help others with less access and less privilege. Letter writer, I appreciate your note and I see that Food has written back. Thank you for your vulnerability, sharing with us where you are. And remember, there are so many people in that same space, so we're really grateful that you took the time to write and let us know how you are experiencing your food peace journey.

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: Did you enjoy this episode of the Love Food podcast? I would love it if you took a screenshot right now and shared it on Insta stories and tagged me. I love knowing other people listening to the show, and other ways you can support the show include leaving rating, a review, subscribing, sharing an episode, and also supporting advertisers for the Love Food podcast. Doing all of those acts of kindness, really helps the show grow. So thank you in advance.

Julie: All right, enough of all that. Until next time, take care.

Julie (as Food): Dear struggling with food peace, You have been so wise, taking care of yourself in the best way you knew how, and know how. You were given limited tools, and no informed consent on how they are really destructive weapons. The stress and ways you've adapted weren't the problem. You don't need to be fixed. You've just been following diet cultures' limited script that keeps attention away from its founding father, white supremacy. Let's flip that script and shine a light on collective wisdom. Every step you take away from diet culture helps others on the same path. Together, we can make new norms and dismantle barriers to food peace. 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.