

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

Julie: Hi and welcome to episode 253 of the Love Food podcast. I'm Julie Duffy Dillon, registered dietitian and partner on your food peace journey. I'm so glad you're here. Thank you for connecting today. And this is a special Love Food podcast episode where I am actually not reading a letter, and this is a bonus. You may be surprised, if you subscribe to the show you may have poof, just had this magical extra episode. And if you're new to the Love Food podcast, welcome. I'm glad we connected and found each other. And usually, I have a letter from a listener just like you who has a complicated relationship with food. And we read their letter, and me and sometimes a guest sift through it and help, hopefully, find some new tools for that person to move forward on their food peace journey on their own terms. But today, I have a top three episode. It's kind of a new thing that I am just playing around with, and today's episode is going to explore the top three reasons why intuitive eating and PCOS go hand in hand. So, if you're new to me, I am someone who talks about polycystic ovarian syndrome a lot, because that's an area of specialization that I have. I've worked with people with a complicated relationship with food of all kinds for over 20 years. But, in particular, over the last 10 years or so, I've been really um specializing in PCOS. I don't live with PCOS. So it is an honor and a privilege to be able to sit alongside someone as they are exploring their complicated relationship with food. And PCOS is a condition in particular that, like I always say, is a diet culture magnet, and I'm excited to share with you why I think rejecting diet culture, continuing on your food peace journey with whatever tool you connect with, which may be intuitive eating, is something that I am really rooting for. And I know there are many people, some of them experts in PCOS, some of them kind of influencers in social media, who are totally against this. So, I want to share with you why. I want to verbalize why I think rejecting diets through intuitive eating goes so well with PCOS. So, before we get to these top three reasons, a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): Feeling stuck in a shame loop, hopeless that your PCOS will keep you trapped dieting forever? Let's renovate and calibrate your understanding of PCOS. Let's liberate your diet rock bottom to a more secure foundation. This foundation will be based on science, body autonomy, and sustainable tools. Interested in this different way to manage your PCOS? This is what my PCOS and Food Peace course is all about. You may be wondering what you get from the course. Well, expect to feel more at home in your body. Energized to live your life, and more power navigating that healthcare bullshit. You'll have insight into those intense, primal carb cravings and gather tools that align with your life, not the cookie cutter options diets preach. No way. I invite you to this different way to manage your PCOS, my PCOS and Food Peace course. I'm doing a last minute summer sale, giving you 30% off using the coupon code "liberate" at checkout. Time is running out to purchase this course. I'll be closing it permanently this November. You'll have access to all of its wisdom, including a monthly coaching calls with me through May of 2022. Plenty of time to gather the tools and resources to undiet your PCOS. Super special bonus though, only PCOS and Food Peace course members will get 50% off my new PCOS course and group coaching program in spring of 2022. Yes, 50% off. Remember, only PCOS and Food Peace Course members will get this discount off my future program. Get to all the details at PCOS and Food Peace dot com. Enter liberate at checkout to get 30% off.

Julie: As I was packing up to leave my job as a clinical dietitian in a really big hospital system near me, I told the dietitian that we hired to replace me that I had a secret. That I was going to quit being a dietitian. I hadn't told anybody yet, but I told her. You see, I had been working as a dietitian for about three years, and had come up against some really hard things about my job as a dietitian. I was taught how to help people make healthy choices, but I was noticing that so much of that came across as elitist and wasn't really taking in account access. That I was missing the point when people were not able to actually access enough food, why was I talking to them about increasing fruits and vegetables? It seemed insensitive and not right. I didn't know what to do because I thought, hey, my training is a dietitian. All I knew- know is how to like tell people some didactic information, do this, not that. Thankfully, that person, her name is Alice Baker. She handed me the book, *Intuitive Eating*. This is back in 2002. Like I said, I was getting ready to leave my clinical dietitian job and start grad school to learn how to become a mental health counselor. I was determined that I was going to do a career switch at this point, but I still, I still needed to work during grad school. So, I knew I was going to be still practicing as a dietitian here and there. I wish I actually would have read *Intuitive Eating* in 2002 because it really would have made a really big difference as I was getting this degree. But I didn't until I finished. And as I finished my grad degree, and I got my first job as a dietitian and behaviorist, I was helping people recover from eating disorders and at the same time working as a weight loss dietitian. Yes, it's true. I totally used to put people on diets. I did for a long time, and it didn't take very long in this position though, to hold together this really fucked up duality of helping people recover from eating disorders while also teaching disordered eating to fat clients.

Julie: Reading the book *Intuitive Eating* was the nudge, in the moment of cognitive dissonance that I was experiencing in 2004, it was the nudge that pushed me through. I was able to quit that job, and I have been trying to unlearn my own anti fat bias ever since. While intuitive eating processes take excellent level of financial privilege and access, I do credit it to helping me name a new way to practice and not quit dietetics. One thing I know to be true is that intuitive eating centers healing from diet culture and reclaiming your expert role of your body. While many people talk about *Intuitive Eating* in regards to promoting weight loss, including in PCOS circles, centering, centering healing while centering weight loss, it just cannot be held together. I stand by that. Centering healing while centering weight loss cannot be held together. This is why: centering weight loss discriminates against millions of people. It upholds part of the systems that are founded in white supremacy. It's also futile for most, and for those of you with PCOS, it increases your risk for more disease. In fact, dieting is something that has been found to cause disease and certain ones that, having PCOS, you are definitely concerned with.

Julie: All right. So, my top three reasons now, why PCOS and intuitive eating belong together. All right. Number one: the hormonal imbalances associated with PCOS make diets a short term solution, yet harmful long term. 75-95% of people with PCOS experience higher circulating insulin. So, if you have PCOS, you probably do have higher insulin levels, and hearing that word, insulin, unfortunately, is a diet culture magnet. Insulin is something that is a target for diet culture. Because, short term, we know dieting, whatever diet you choose, is something that seems to decrease insulin short term. Again, any diet, it doesn't matter which one. They all seem to be impacted short term and to help lower insulin levels. Here's the unfortunate part. Our long-term dieting research has found that dieting of any kind, whether you continue it or not, causes

higher insulin. Do you know- Do you know how often I'm actually able to say the word cause when it comes to nutrition research? You won't hear me say it very often because there's so little causal research available. It's really, really hard to be able to set up nutrition research that shows causation. Most research that looks at higher weight and disease is correlational. All the only exception is for people who have the highest and lowest standard deviations of B. M. I. For most people, it's just a relationship. But what we know to be true, is that dieting long term is something that causes higher insulin. And if most people with PCOS already have high insulin levels, why would you want to make them higher? I don't think you want to. Unfortunately, even if you continue the diet or not dieting, it makes it worse.

Julie: Let's move on to number two. The second reason why intuitive eating and PCOS belong together is that PCOS is associated with a chronic pro inflammatory state. Unfortunately, chronic dieting is associated with that pro inflammatory state too. So, one thing to keep in mind is that people with PCOS experience this chronic pro inflammatory state that we know predicts diseases like diabetes. This is often used as the reason to suggest a diet, is to lower inflammation markers, and just like with insulin, any diet, pick any that you want. Any diet decreases inflammation markers in the short term, yet worsens it long term. Do you experience any of these common PCOS symptoms? Infertility? IBS? Brain fog, fatigue, intense carb cravings? These are just a few of the common PCOS symptoms that are connected to inflammation and insulin, and finding ways to lower both of these are ways to help with managing those symptoms. Unfortunately, dieting works a little bit in the short term, but for most people, it's only going to make those worse. So, finding ways to move away from dieting and intuitive eating can be that tool for you. Moving away from dieting with PCOS is something that can help insulin and inflammation.

Julie: Okay, let's move on to number three. So, number three is, researchers have been able to find that weight cycling predicts binge eating for those of you with PCOS. In particular, a 2016 study reported that 39% of people with PCOS in their study met full criteria for binge eating disorder. That's a really big deal. And then 60% met at least one criteria. Did you know that recovering from Binge eating disorder takes on average 7-14 years? So, it's vital to find ways to live with PCOS without triggering that eating disorder. I know so many of you that are living with PCOS and recovering from binge eating disorder are only given weight loss tools to help you manage both? I say that with a question mark, and a very frustrated question mark, because it's really easy to see how binge eating cannot be treated with weight loss. It's something that's only going to make it worse. And then when you have PCOS on top of it, noticing the research that we just went through in that first two, it's only going to intensify the symptoms, it's only going to intensify those really intense primal carb cravings. So that 2016 study that I was referencing a moment ago, it was interesting that it found that binge eating behavior was predicted by weight cycling. So, in essence, the more one went on and off a diet, our weight cycled, the more likely they also experience binge eating. So, helping you connect to tools to avoid weight cycling will help you experience less bingeing. Like we have this now in research, and I know your in person, healthcare providers are just so oh, so married to the weight loss paradigm. You know, that phrase married to the weight loss paradigm, is one that I first heard from Chevys Turner, she's a therapist who lives with PCOS. And I totally agree. And we know from research that pushing you to continue to diet and go on and diet and off a diet, because that's how most people are going to experience diets, is just going to predict binge eating. So how do we do the opposite? Let's get you off that diet train. You don't have to diet while living

with PCOS, and actually finding ways to move away from dieting and moving away from weight cycling can help decrease binge eating for those of you with PCOS.

Julie: All right. So, I know what this this is supposed to be a top three, but I have to do a bonus. I just have to. And this is probably the most important. The reason why intuitive eating and PCOS goes so hand in hand to me is because the constant push for you with PCOS to lose weight is so harmful, because it is provoking more and more people to not go to the doctor. So it's preventing healthcare access. And why would you want to go to the doctor when you're just going to get re-traumatized over and over again? And, here's the other part, pushing people to lose weight to treat a condition is contributing to the oppression that is hurting fat people with PCOS. So, encouraging dieting is a part of the problem. Big, huge systemic problem. This is not something as an individual, one of us can just change, but let's rally together. Together, let's promote anti diet ways to help you to manage your PCOS. Just know there's more and more people who are shouting from the rooftops either from their lived experience, or as a clinician, or both. There are many people with PCOS who are clinicians who are helping people to recover from diet culture. And then there's those of us who are honored and privileged to be walking alongside you, supporting you as you reject diet culture. So many people ask after they kind of come to this realization from themselves that, yep, I'm not going to diet anymore and I'm living with PCOS. So how do I actually make intuitive eating work? Well, intuitive eating can look different living with PCOS. And I invite you to check out my PCOS and Food Peace course. It is a course designed to help you to divorce that dumpster fire, that diet culture bullshit that you have been fed to believe, and give you tools to help you to align with the way that you want to live with your PCOS and to help you to flip the script, you know, to move away from it being an individual issue and to really, to recognize that this is a systemic problem in PCOS circles and together we can change things. So, if you are interested, go to PCOSandFoodPeace.com. And remember, through Thursday July 22nd, you can get 30% off using the coupon code liberate at checkout. So go to PCOSandFoodPeace.com and use the coupon code liberate at checkout for 30% off.

Julie: All right. I'm gonna sign off for now, but until next time. Take care.

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.