

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 260 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 I hope through this connection that I'm able to provide you some new different insight as you are just sifting through your own complicated relationship with food. I know for many listeners, and maybe you, you're hoping to rewrite your fate. Maybe you thought you always were going to have to diet because of a chronic health condition, or you have been in the throes of an eating disorder and that's all you really know. Or maybe you really are starting to see how fucked up and shitty diet culture is to your fellow humans, but just don't know another way. Well, this episode is for you. I am going to be exploring the top three reasons why diets are designed to fail us. Yes, all of us, and this is a different episode. So, if you are new to the Love Food podcast, well, welcome. But typically our episodes include a letter from a listener just like you who describes their complicated relationship with food. And um, I sift through it, provide some possible um, directions to go, to continue to heal. But today I don't have a letter, I'm going to go through the top three reasons why diets are designed to fail us. And again, like I said, I hope it brings you some new insight on your journey. But before we get to these top three, a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad break): This episode of the 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 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 top three.

Julie: An hour ago, I got a notification to join a special PCOS Clubhouse room. If you don't know what Clubhouse is, well, think about it as another social media app like Instagram or Facebook, and Clubhouse is an audio version. So obviously, as someone who is obsessed with listening to podcasts and have my own podcast, I love audio. So Clubhouse was something that I started using back in January and um, I love listening to it, and I'm just kind of on there um, hearing what people have to say. If you're on there and want to catch up with me there I'm at pcos.food.peace. And I unfortunately got asked to come to this room, and I had to turn it off after a few minutes because I was feeling violently ill from it. There was so much normalization of diets and diet talk as a solution to living with this chronic illness, PCOS, and at the same time talking about it as not a diet. It was honestly quite a mind fuck. And that's why I had to turn it off. It just was so offensive to me. And I know that again, it's like so normal, and that is what is so hard and what inspired today's episode.

Julie: I think diets are designed to fail you and me. Diets are designed to fail us. They're sneaky and intrusive and also violent. I'm going to share with you why I think that right now. So as we know, diets are framed as a solution. I'm trained as a dietitian. I finished my training as a dietitian in the late 90s and when I finished in the late 90s, I thought, "hey, someone's diagnosed with some chronic condition? I teach them this special way to eat and it will fix everything. You just have to follow these rules and really just see it as a mindset issue, and your weight will go down forever, and you'll feel great, and you'll never have to be bothered by it again. If it's not working well, just try harder, or you're not doing it right, just keep at it." Again, it's this individual kind of way of looking at it as just mindset. There's some really popular diets out there that have really pissed me off. One in particular is Noom. It is one that has been focusing on the psychological kind of considerations with diets that, you know, basically what I hear from it is if you're not able to do it well, you're stupid, you need to learn how to do things differently. And I know I framed that in such an offensive way, but that's the way I hear it. It is offensive. You're not stupid. There's nothing wrong with your psychology. You're living in a- an environment that has gaslit you to think that you don't know how to eat, that you don't have the tools.

Julie: So the top three reasons why diets are designed to fail us, frame it in that way. And the first thing that I want you to remember, number one: diets are designed to fail us because they're not sustainable. Like I said, diets are designed to be like, basically this print out, this didactic information. If you just follow the set of rules, well then you're going to be fixed right up. Here's what they're missing. You're not a robot. You're not some Petri dish that can be studied in a lab with controlled settings. You are not a math problem needing to be solved. You're a human being. You have relationships, you have emotional health, spiritual health, psychological health, along with physical health. Eating is such a complex experience because not only is it about calories in and calories out, it's also hormones. It's also relationships. It's pleasure. And having diets designed as like this sheet to follow this, this like rules to follow ignores that you are actually a human. You aren't a robot. And if you've tried dieting, you may have found like the

first few times you tried a certain diet, it quote “worked”, meaning that it promoted a weight change. You may have actually felt better too, you may actually have seen your labs improved, like your blood sugar lowered or your cycle improved. You may have slept better, felt better, felt more confident, more at home in your body. You may have had all these positive experiences. But then as that kind of slipped away, instead of really honoring that the tool you were given was a piece of shit, you thought you were the piece of shit. Because that's how diets are designed to fuck with our brain. They are not sustainable. If they were sustainable, why would you have to keep going on them? If diets were sustainable, why would you have to keep going on them? And why would we need diet companies? Wouldn't they go out of business if they worked? People wouldn't have to keep going on them. These are really important questions, and I encourage you to make sure that when you sit with, “why has that diet not really quote ‘worked’ for me,” was that it had nothing to do with you, but that it was a tool that was not honoring your humanity.

Julie: All right, are you ready? Move on to number two. The second reason why diets are designed to fail us is that diets promote harm. It's really sad that dieting is considered this harmless kind of recommendation. When you were diagnosed with diabetes, high blood pressure, PCOS, or if a doctor or another health care provider said your weight was not where they wanted to be, I know they just flippantly said you should diet. They may have said, just choose whichever one you want, or do the one that I did, or do this one that I've read about that sounds really interesting. Or do this one that was shown in research on rats to help decrease the cytokine storm when it comes to inflammation from adipose- adipose tissues. Yeah, there's actually research that is saying that kind of shit. Remember you are not lab rats, and remember that N equals one is not actually good research recommendations. If you're not familiar with N equals one and what that means, it's basically generalizing research from one person to assume that it helps everyone. What we know to be true is that dieting research should really be grouped into short term and long term. Short term dieting research makes it look really favorable, and it honestly doesn't matter which diet recommendation you choose. Any diet shows that it can help do things like lower insulin, lower your blood sugar, lower your cholesterol, increase your confidence, make you feel less anxious and depressed, help you have more sex. I think I just threw that one in there. But I'm sure there's some research in there that's saying that. Short term research does look really favorable on diets. And the majority of research that health care providers are using to recommend that diet quite flippantly to you is based on the short term research. Short term, what does that mean? Well, that could be four weeks long, six weeks long, or 12 weeks long. 12 weeks in research on diet research and in particular is honestly at times considered long term. Is that long enough for you? I mean if you're supposed to be doing this intermittent fasting, or cutting out carbs, or sugar, or keto, or whatever the fuck they're recommending at this point, if you're supposed to be doing this forever, is six weeks or 12 weeks long enough to show that it is a good enough recommendation for you? I don't think it's good enough for you. It's not, because here's the thing. We do have some data looking at the long term effects of dieting, and just so you know, when we have looked at these studies, it doesn't matter if someone continues with the diet or not. The outcomes are really the same. And what does the long term data show us? Well, the long term data shows us whether a person continues to diet or not, insulin levels go back up even higher, inflammation worsens, cholesterol worsens, blood pressure worsens, your risk of diabetes- diabetes is more than when you even, before you even started the diet. Of course, most people regain the weight that they lost, and one-third to two-thirds of people regain even more than they lost to begin with.

Julie: There's another important piece to name in this harm. Working as a dietitian specializing in eating disorders for the last 20 years, I also have seen dieting as the gateway to eating disorders. Eating disorders, of course, are a complex combination of biological, psychological, environmental um, disease that doesn't just happen for no reason. But one thing that's a commonality for most people with an eating disorder is that it was triggered by a diet. Now, I know there's a health care provider who's listening right now and is like, "well, you know, eating disorders are really rare, so it's- it's worth the kind of risk for the people that it does help. You know, most people are not going to experience an eating disorder," and I really don't think that's the case. Yes, I know that research finds that things like anorexia and bulimia are considered not uh, common experiences, but there are some errors in the way that we research eating disorders, because the way that people research eating disorders are often based on weight. And I have seen some of the most intense and deadly eating disorders in clients who don't look like they have one. No one is going to assess a fat person for anorexia, because they don't think that they're restricting. Um, and I know that there is a listener right now who is like, oh yeah, I am barely eating and my weight is not going down. No one knows that I'm in the throes of hell, and it all started with that diet recommendation. Remember diet recommendations are just thrown out there as not a big deal, and you might as well try this first as a first recommendation, and they are setting you up to be at risk for an eating disorder, have all those biological problems that I just mentioned, like the higher cholesterol, insulin inflammation. And they're also setting you up to weight cycle. Weight cycling is this word that we use in research that is another name for yo yo dieting, when someone goes on and off a diet and then their weight kind of responds, going up and down. What we know about cycling in particular that's really important for people with PCOS, which PCOS, also called polycystic ovarian syndrome, is a chronic health condition that I specialize in. We have found in research that weight cycling predicts binge eating for people with PCOS. So, the more someone is going on and off a diet with PCOS, the more likely they're going to be experiencing at least one of the criteria for binge eating disorder. And not only that, 39% in one particular research study, that full criteria for binge eating disorder, and again, weight cycling is the big predictor of that. So if you are a health care provider flippantly recommending diets, just know that you're setting your patient up to weight cycle and to worsen health long term, and also to gaslight them into thinking that, you know, controlling their weight is all just willpower. It's all mindset. I honestly, you know, the whole mindset conversation, I know there's lots of people, colleagues of mine, who are really big into mindset, and I think it has its place, but I also think mindset work at times is problematic because it makes it seem like it's all on you and the way that you think, when so much of the struggle with a relationship with food has to do with systemic oppression and how the world has taught you your body's value. That's not something that you can just change with mindset. We have to all link arms together and change the world, fix the way the world treats your body. And that brings us to number three.

Julie: The third reason why diets are designed to fail us is that they contribute to systemic oppression. Of course, systemic oppression are these big huge systems that are designed to keep certain people from, for lack of a better phrase, from living their best life or really living their life and accessing things that are just, your right as a human, like safety and health care. How do diets do this? Well, when we are taught to diet, and when they don't work in the short or long term, of course there's this way that we've been conditioned to blame ourselves. Blame ourselves, we're not working, we didn't try hard enough, or there's something wrong with us and that's why

it didn't work. And of course, for many people, what that translates to being is that there's so much shame that you're holding onto that you just avoid then accessing things like health care, or taking care of yourself, making a meal for yourself, moving your body in a way that feels pleasurable, avoiding pleasure altogether, and contributing to things like depression and other ways that basically contribute to us feeling like shit about ourselves. Besides just like, individual kind of ways of messing with our brain, having diets as this norm, as a way to increase health, and as a modifiable kind of way to lower your weight, having that as a norm and a truth is something that promotes discrimination against fat people. So in essence, you and I living our life, if we're holding on to this false truth that someone in a lower body is smart enough and has enough willpower and enough character to be able to eat a small amount and then vice versa, someone who's in a higher weight body just isn't smart enough and doesn't have enough willpower is lacking character and that's why they're in a higher weight body, like, holding on to that, I hope you can appreciate and- and can see up close the issue with that, how that promotes discrimination against fat people. How that prevents people from having equal access in school, having equal access in job interviews, from having equal access when they go to the doctor. There's messages all around us all the time moving through our air unchecked that lets us know that in order to be valuable, you need to have a certain body, and one of those values is being thin enough. So, dieting is designed to fail us because it is really making us have a blindness towards how this individual thought for ourselves is really contributing hard to harm to the whole community. The more work you can do to help identify your own uh, way that you've learned about dieting, diet culture, um your own relationship with food and challenging it, the more work you can do on the individual level, the more it can contribute to setting other people free, especially people with less access than you and me. I really got to appreciate that point from reading Sonya Renee Taylor's work. So, if that is something that interests you or sparks some interest, definitely check out Sonya Renee Taylor's book, *The Body is Not an Apology*. There's a whole chapter that kind of goes into that concept, and I'm forever grateful for having really been able to- a chance to really sit with that and connect that as a true way of moving forward in our own relationship with food, how it does contribute to a better world.

Julie: All right, so it is time to wrap up. But I hope you got some really important insight as to why diets aren't working: because they're designed to fail.

Julie: Did you enjoy this episode of the Love Food podcast? Well if you did, I would love it if you left a rating, a review, subscribed, or shared an episode. Doing any of those four acts of kindness really helps the show grow, and I appreciate any kind of active service in that regard. Again, it really helps the show grow, help more people find the show. And so like I was just saying, don't we want everyone have access to food peace?

Julie (ad break): This episode was also sponsored by the Ovofolic, a new way to get your inositol supplement for those of you affected with PCOS. Would you like 15% off? Just for Love Food listeners, go to elanhealthcare.ca/discount/foodpeace. There's a link in the shownotes, and remember Elan is spelled E L A N. So go to elanhealthcare.ca/discount/foodpeace.

Julie: (ad break): This episode of the Love Food podcast was brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. You can get to all the details at PCOSandFoodPeace.com.

Julie: Alright, 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.