

Intro music: Bags are packed, are you ready to go?...This time tomorrow we'll be on the road...riding with you into sunnier days...I wouldn't want it any other way.

Julie: It's time to name the neglect from typical food advice. Welcome to the Find Your Food Voice podcast, hosted by me, Julie Duffy Dillon. I'm a registered dietitian with 20 years of experience partnering with folks just like you on their food peace journey. What have we learned? Well, cookie cutter approaches exclude too many people, and you don't need to be fixed. It's not you. It's not me. It's all of us. Only together we can start a movement and fix diet culture. And we will. Let's begin with now.

Transition music: I want to see how the world turns round...Let's go adventure in the deep blue sea...home is with you wherever that may be...home is with you wherever that may be.

Julie: Hi and welcome to episode 283 of the Find Your food Voice podcast. I am Julie Duffy Dillon, registered dietitian and partner on your food peace journey. How is that journey going for you today? You know, something that I firmly believe is that your food peace journey would probably be a lot flatter and not as much of an incline, it would be straight and clear and probably have a point where you felt totally complete, if we lived in a world that actually understood that diet culture was a part of it. Like, we're literally having to breathe diet culture's air everywhere we go. Yeah, it makes this thing just so much harder, and you know, recovering your relationship with food is really important work. You deserve to feel at home in your body. You deserve to feel safe in your body. You deserve to have pleasure with your body, including with food. Yes, like, that is a part of the human experience that I think every human should be able to have any time they want. And um, a part of that is just so hard, actually not a part, like so much of that is so hard because diet culture is walking around unchecked. Something else I always say is that recovering from diet culture or your eating disorder would be so much easier if the world just recovered from its own. But that's taking a while, and the only way we're going to be able to change that, of course, is by us coming together and making that change. It's not your individual burden. But one of the parts that diet culture is really loud about is that certain bodies can't fit. You only have to take one airplane ride to know that certain bodies have the ability to feel more comfort, and then all the rest are going to have to just suck in, contort, and feel pain in order to be able to use that seat.

Julie: And this episode of the Find Your Food Voice podcast is a diet culture IRL episode with Coleen Bremner. So Coleen is someone that works behind the scenes at the Find Your Food Voice podcast and PCOS Power, and also is someone that has really found some really hard steps as she has been recovering from diet culture. And today's episode just sifts through her experience where she did not get a chance to feel welcome because of her body. Um, I appreciate you, Coleen, so much, sharing your experience, and I know for you, the listener, it's something that you will also be really grateful for. But before we get to hear from Coleen and hear our discussion, a quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad): This episode of the Find Your Food Voice podcast is brought to you by my PCOS roadmap. So if you are living with this chronic condition, PCOS, and you are also trying to recover from diet culture that you're finding it so challenging to just move away from dieting as you're living with PCOS. Well, I have a free download for you. This is a download for somebody

who has been diagnosed with PCOS and also feels like, oh my gosh, I cannot even fathom starting another diet but I feel like I have to. You don't have to. I promise you do not have to start another diet. Start with the PCOS roadmap. It gives you your first three steps to move away from diets while living with PCOS. And by getting that download, you also will get on my email list for other products that I provide for people with PCOS. So you can get to that road map at julieduffydillon.com/voice. Again, it's julieduffydillon.com/voice, and you'll get right to that PCOS roadmap.

Julie: Alright, let's go ahead and start this episode and hear from Coleen Bremner with her experience with diet culture IRL.

Transition music: Take the good and the ups and downs...I want to see how the world turns around. Home is with you wherever that may be.

Coleen: Today's diet culture IRL is brought to you by never-ending fatphobia and the patriarchal world in which we reside. My husband and I celebrated our mini moon late September of last year. The mini moon was our abbreviated honeymoon until we can have the real deal when COVID officially slows down. We frolicked around Richmond, Virginia, eating delicious barbecue, dressing up, and ended the weekend with a trip to King's Dominion. The weekend was filled with love and laughter. We had the best time until an event that happens all too often, living in a fat body, occurred. We waited 45 minutes to ride a roller coaster and we got to the front. The lap bar wouldn't close over my lap. To my horror, a buzzing sound went off, and a red light flashed above my seat as two men walked over and tried to shove me into the seat and jammed the bar down. After about five minutes of my mortification, the ride took off. The lap bar was so tight on my legs, my thighs were bruised for days. I wanted to go back in time and just let my husband ride without me, but it was too late. Everyone was watching us, it was really really embarrassing. Not only was this experience awful, it put a damper on what was such a perfect weekend. Once again, I was reminded my body doesn't fit in this world, and there was something wrong with me, not the ride. My husband was wonderful, of course, sharing they should have tested the seats out for folks or build rides that can actually accommodate everyone. This isn't a standalone experience. Someone close to me shared a similar story. They paid an exorbitant amount of money to visit Pandora in Disney's Animal Kingdom, and when they got to the ride they were unable because of the size of the seats. Why wasn't there information on the website to let them know the dimensions before they bought their ticket? Why don't people think about the ways these decisions affect other people? It's honestly so disheartening and happens all the time. So today I want to invite Julie to hop on IRL and help unpack today's diet culture IRL.

Julie: Hey Coleen, thank you for sharing this experience. Um, that is, it was, when I was reading through it before you recorded it just now and then listening to you, it's so heavy like it's, so thank you for like, sharing your experiences first of all, like that is something I just want to thank you for doing. But um, yeah, so, one thing I wanted to say to kind of like start things off, you know, thinking about a listener too, is this experience is probably the number one reason why clients have ended work with me and decided to pursue a gastric bypass surgery. Like, the roller coaster, like literally like that moment um, or the fear of that moment. Um, so that's why I'm like, what I was like listening to you, I was like, this is really, really heavy. So, and when I say heavy, of course, I hope, you know, I'm not talking about like the scale.

Coleen: Yes, of course!

Julie: [Laughs] It's a weighty like emotional, like it's a lot. And I say that because for the clients who had left me because they were like, it's time, I can't do this work anymore, um, there was a part of them that would describe a lot of like, shame of like, especially people who had been unpacking and anti diet work for, for years, and like, oh I must be doing it wrong because I am quote "still" like not able to like get over this and I'm like, oh my gosh, like this is, that doesn't, this doesn't make them a bad person or they're not doing it right. This, this world is so not built in the way that it needs to be built to be accessible, but I know we'll get to that. Um, but I just wanted to name that. Like this is a really big deal and so many people would minimize it. Like why do I think it's such a big deal, but it is, you know? And you sharing too about your, um, you know, you just got married and I was following along on Instagram with your pictures, and like you all like look so in love and everything was like so sparkly and warm fuzzy and just to, yeah, read about this part-

Coleen: To know behind the scenes that this event happened. Yeah.

Julie: Yeah, yeah, that's, that's, that's a lot. Um, so let's walk through the experience, like what, what that felt like for you?

Coleen: Oh my gosh, I know that this experience is shared by many people. So I want to name that as well, and just like remind everyone that like the world not making space for you is not your fault. So that's kind of like-

Julie: Can you say that again?

Coleen: Yeah. [Laughs] The world not making space for you is not your fault. And I think in that moment, I was mortified. Everyone was in line like staring at us as these men like, jammed the seat bar down on me, and like honestly all I wanted to do was get up and run or like melt into the seat. I wanted to just disappear completely. And I think that in that moment I mentioned this when we were talking before, but I felt like I wasn't like, my normal like, body advocate self, I felt like all that power that I have, like felt like I've internalized in this space was like, stripped away. Um, and I think that's what is so heinous about fatphobia and the system and society in which we live, is that it makes you feel really small and it makes you feel ashamed and it makes you feel like you can't really tackle things like maybe you normally would feel like you can. And I think, yeah, in that moment I just was like, oh my god, this is mortifying. And I was, I was really embarrassed. Um, and then like, I mean, you know, sitting next to the love of my life and him, I think feeling my discomfort was also like a whole 'nother aspect of it. So yeah.

Julie: The word heinous is just what I want to highlight. 100%, that is like such a great word to describe that. Um, and you know what, when you mentioned earlier, like you didn't, you weren't like a body positive advocate in that moment. My instinct was to argue with you, but, not to like invalidate your experience, please. I, just know that's not what I'm saying, but like you were you're living in the same world as other people who are like knee deep in their dieting, and um, a human being, and so even though you were like reacting to the world not being accessible, I'm

like, you're still an advocate, like in that moment, you know, like that's what I wanted to argue with, like that didn't take that away, and um, because again, I think it's, it's, you're not doing it wrong, you're not doing it wrong, you know? Like they made the seats too fucking small and they didn't have any informed consent about like, oh, this may not be accessible for everyone.

Coleen: Right!

Julie: You know?

Coleen: And I know some locations have like seats outside. And the thing I'll say about that is that, this place did have a seat outside, and when I tested the seat outside, it worked. So that's the other thing that was really awful.

Julie: Coleen, oh no! I was gonna say that because I know like, one, a company or an amusement park that's like down closer to where I live that's owned by the same company as the one you went to, many of the rides, not all of them, but many of them have, yeah, like the seat out front. So this had it, but it worked.

Coleen: Yeah, so all of this to say though that, and I think I would identify as probably a small fat if we're using that type of terminology, all of this to say that it's still not accessible for people either at or larger than my size. And that's still a problem. Like everyone should have the opportunity to go to an amusement park, and if they want to ride a freaking rollercoaster, they should be able to ride it. Um, so yeah, I just, I think that, I mean I could go on a whole diatribe about what I think should be accessible. But um, I think that-

Julie: Yeah, we should make the list, you know, like, because there's a lot of places, and you know, I appreciate you saying that because there may be places for you where you're not able to access and there's some people who deserve the same dignity and humanity who are experiencing this inaccessibility everywhere they go.

Coleen: Yes, absolutely.

Julie: Because of their body size. And um, yeah, I can remember about like, holding meetings in rooms where chairs were too small for people and um, thankfully someone would bring that to my attention, and talking about like the bruises that these chairs would leave. And um, so when you were talking about that, first of all, like also not first of all, but also, the two men coming over to like push down the bar, like there was something to me that I was like, that sounds very like, inappropriate and violent and-

Coleen: Yes, and just like, ew? Like, yeah, it was awful. I almost wish there was legislation for places to, that said something like, not only can you not discriminate based off of like, body image, body size, but also you need to actively look at your space and see if it is accessible for every body that is coming in there, like regardless of their ability, regardless of their size, and any, anything and, and have people like almost have it as a checklist, because I go into theaters where it's uncomfortable for me to sit, airplanes, like you name it. Things are, kayaks! Like, things are not made for us. And I say the collective like, us.

Julie: Mm hmm. Mm hmm. Yeah. Yeah. And that's not okay. And to, um, you know, going back to people that I worked with individually who had experienced so much harm constantly because the world was not accessible that they were like, I'm going to like, cut open this perfectly healthy organ and um, make me malabsorb for the rest of my life just to have access that I should have being alive. You know? Like um, and I mean, that shows I think too for like people like me who are straight sized and have access everywhere. Like, because I think some people will minimize how this is impactful, and that someone will go amputate an organ that's perfectly healthy in order to have access. I think that shows like how um, these microaggressions add up to be big, huge oppressive systems. And of course then, if you're not experiencing access like, the craving to diet will be there, you know, and um wanting to be smaller, and there's a buzzer, oh my gosh, the buzzer going off, with the big red light?

Coleen: It was like, it was like a 1984 like, flashback. Like, I don't know if anyone's ever read 1984 but just like, oh, like the fat police are coming for you and like, I'm sitting in this with the siren and the red light and I'm like, okay, well they're gonna remove me from the ride, or they're going to shove me into it, like one or the other. So it was really surreal.

Julie: Hmm. Is this something that um, you and your new husband, have you all talked about it?

Coleen: I don't think we've ever actually sat down and like, unpacked it like we're doing right now. I think after it happened, he was like, are you okay? And I was still, I'm someone that I'm going to answer yes, I'm fine, after, but I'm not gonna, I'm going to be reeling on it for a minute. I mean, and it's taken me until, that was September, it's March now. It's taken me months even to write down or talk about how that affected me. So no, to answer your question, no.

Julie: Well, I don't know if he listens to Find Your Food Voice. Like, this will be the invitation to talk about. I don't know. And actually, as I say that, I don't even know if you need that um, what would feel like, um, repair work for it. I don't, I don't know if that's part of it for you. But is there anything that you wish you could have said or done differently in that moment?

Coleen: Honestly, I don't think so. Like I guess in my mind like there's a reason that I handled it the way that I did and that like, now I have this opportunity to talk about it to people listening who can maybe either relate based off previous experiences that they've had, or like maybe, I think for me it's hard. I always feel like I need to brainstorm an action plan. Like instead of just experiencing something in life and thinking about it, or, I'm always like, okay, what's the next step I can take to try and like, talk about this or relate to other people or? So I think that's kind of my like, need is that, it's not necessarily, I mean, Max lives in a straight sized body as well, and as much as he loves me and definitely understands the work that I do. His experiences are not the same, and, and he's also a white man. So, I mean there are a lot of differences for us that I think that, I love him, but I'm not sure that I would need to unpack it with him. And if I did, he would, he would, he would listen and be wonderful. But.

Julie: Yeah, yeah, yeah, so that wouldn't do what, yeah that wouldn't be it. Well, and okay, so I want to ask you a question if you're, and as I ask it, if you're like, no, I don't really want to answer that or that feels like, I'm asking something that probably has a lot of emotional labor to

it. So, um, I hope you'll let me know if you want to answer it or not. Um, is there anything like those two guys could have done differently? Like if, if you had, had the ability to like direct them to handle that differently. I mean, of course like, having different seating so like it actually was accessible. I mean, I'm not expecting those two guys to be able to do that, but is there anything that they could have done differently or you would recommend them to do when that happens in the future?

Coleen: Such a great question. I think first and foremost like, get rid of the buzzer slash the light siren that goes off. Um, which I recognize is probably a safety feature of the ride. So, I get that they want everyone to be as safe as possible in a ride. Um, but I think, and also to these dudes' credit, they were doing their job, right? Like they're, they're coming over and they are like, we, I imagine it comes from a good place of like, wanting people to be safe on the ride. So I should preface with that. But um, I think that like, the best course of action would always be to ask for consent if you're going to come over and lay hands anywhere near another human being, like, hey, is it okay if we, do you want to ride this ride, should we try to push the lap bar down, or would you feel more comfortable getting up and exiting? And like, we can recommend other rides for you that, that would work, like the ferris wheel or like-

Julie: Coleen, that's so wonderful. That's like, what a like, that's such a concrete like direction. Even just like, ask permission and like these, are the two choices we have. You know, and we can recommend other rides that are accessible.

Coleen: And then cherry on top like, sorry about this horrible incident. Here's a gift card to a free ice cream later. Like, just saying. [Laughs] I can heal pretty much all wounds with ice cream.

Julie: Right? I feel like they always give away the way the free soda. You know, I know they're like, price margin's really, yeah. Really, the ice cream may not be as good of a price margin. Like um, so King's Dominion. You know what you need to do.

Coleen: I'm calling all King's Dominion employees. Now's the time, rise up.

Julie: Right? But I mean simple as that. Like what a wonderful thing to include in a training for people who do roller coaster like, safety checks, is first to explain what's going on. Ask permission, and give a choice. Like we can try to push down or you can exit. Which one would you rather do? I wish they would have done that.

Coleen: That's like, that can go across to so many other areas of life, right? Like, ask permission. Give a few options. Like, let the person in the experience decide what's best for them.

Julie: Mhmmm. You know, something we should highlight that we haven't is, you're not new to anti-diet work. And I say that because so many people have told me they have felt so much shame whenever they struggle in these places where the world is not being accommodating, and you know, you described this experience. I'm so grateful that you've given us this like window into your experience, and again like, it wasn't like you just started practicing anti diet work a few months before, this has been something you've been doing for a while. So, I don't know how many, I mean, it's in the year plus mark at this point. Yeah. So um, what I'm gathering is like,

until the world is accommodating, that's gonna happen. Like there's going to be triggers to like, want to be smaller or the craving to diet, until we fix the world. There's going to be that instinct to want to fix ourselves. Is that right?

Coleen: Yeah. I think you've summarized it really well.

Julie: Ugh. Can we just fix it already? Can we fix the world?

Coleen: We're working on it.

Julie: Who do we need to call?

Coleen: With like a bunch of other people.

Julie: Well and you know, that, that's the thing that like, that's the whole reason I changed the name of the podcast. Like, this is not an individual work. Like this is like, we all need to join forces here and really get to work, because like, this isn't going to happen just with like a couple of people. So I, I know you and I are ready to work. So, are you, the listener, ready to work? That is the question, and fingers crossed. Yes, you are.

Coleen: Welcome to the work.

Julie: Welcome to the work. You're gonna get dirty, you're gonna get messy. Um yes, and um, oh my gosh, I want to give a metaphor that was told to me by Lindley Ashline and Laura Burns, I think, I don't remember which of the two kind of came up with it, but I've heard both of them [inaudible], that's why I'm naming both of their names, and I, Lindley and Laura, I may actually not give this metaphor all the beauty that you did. This kind of reminds me of that, like, especially if you're like, I already am working, like not you Coleen, but the listener and um, people talk a lot about body positivity and its flaws, but it's often times the entrance point. And what Lindley and Laura have talked about is how body positivity as the entrance point, there's like donuts and pool parties with floaties, and it's pink and green and has sparkles and sprinkles and stuff, and people can stay in body positivity like, land forever. Um, but really it's like, downstream, there's this fat liberation work that is not having a pool party and it's kind of like, the dirty water like, that, from the body positivity muck that has just gone downstream and it's not pretty, it's not going to be like, one and done, and everybody there is in it for fat liberation, and it's gonna get messy, and um, I don't know, so that's what I was thinking about with this like, if you're ready to do, to join, hopefully you'll come hang out in fat, fat liberation and um, be willing to get really muddy and dirty and [inaudible].

Coleen: I think it's also, it's also okay too like if your entry point is that fat pool party. Like I want to like, name that too, because I obviously started like, I would say in probably Instagram land when I saw a post about like, being worthy and it was a side by side post of someone in a smaller body and then the same person in their larger body, and always seeing something that was like a before and after, or I was expecting those words on the image, and it just said worthy and worthy, and I was like whoa, radical, it like totally radicalized my mind, and like got me curious about what that looked like, and I found it through, I think the body positive hashtag. So

I think that like, yes, there is like definitely a space for all of those incredible like body positive, like feel good moments that you like almost start to like, crave and like, seek out a little bit when you start on your journey. And then you do. You like take off the filter. The like, whatever Instagram beauty filter is on there, and you're like, oh shit. There's like a lot of stuff under here that I did not realize. And honestly like, unpacking some of that. It all feels like it's part of the work. Like, it's like, whether it's for yourself or talking with other friends who are starting to come around, or whatever, whatever it is. It's like, it's all messy and nuanced and exciting and terrifying.

Julie: Mmhmm. Yeah. I'm so glad you mentioned that. Because of course, like body positivity for just about every person I ever talked to, myself included. Like that's how we start to access some of these conversations. So there's gratitude for that, and taking a step back into like, the pool party sometimes. Like um, you know that's when I had my blinders on and I forget about my privileges. Like I'm not dealing with inaccessible like, life. You know? So um, I'm able to escape just naturally. You know? So I thank you for saying that. Yeah. Oh my gosh. I feel like we just started like unpacking the like, I don't know, like the carry on. There's like so much more. But we need we need to wrap up.

Coleen: Julie I have like, several checked bags. So we're gonna be in this, in this ride for a while together.

Julie: Coleen, I love that you just go with the metaphors and we, I mean and you expand on them. So great. Thank you. Thank you. Thank you from, for sharing your lived experience. I'm really grateful that you have shared that with the listener. And um yeah, I'll see you next time for diet culture IRL.

Coleen: Sounds great. Thanks Julie and listener.

Julie: Bye.

Julie: So there you have it. I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Coleen in this episode's diet culture IRL segment. We do this segment every month, and would love to know what you think about it. Do you have any opinions about what we shared today, or have you experienced some really intrusive diet culture IRL moments that you would like to hear us talk about? Definitely let us know, you can tag me over on instagram @FoodVoiceRD. And we would love to hear what you have to say.

Julie: This episode of the Find Your food Voice podcast is brought to you by my PCOS roadmap. If you have PCOS and you are in the beginning stages of trying to move away from dieting, I have made a roadmap just for you. You can get it at julieduffydillon.com, and you will find the download right there for you. You can also by downloading that get on the waitlist to any of the new programs that we'll be offering, including PCOS Power. So go to julieduffydillon.com and you will get yourself that download and be on the wait list.

Julie: If you enjoyed this episode of the Find Your Food voice podcast, I am so glad, and I would love it if you left a rating, a review, subscribed, or shared an episode. Actually, like sharing an

episode is a really powerful thing that you can do. There's a way to copy the link right now in Apple Podcast and share it with a friend or maybe your therapist or dietitian, or share it over on social media. We love that because it helps the Apple Podcast algorithm just help people find like, more topics on anti diet living, and I really appreciate it. So thank you in advance for doing just that. And if you haven't left a review, I would really appreciate a review. And honestly, I would appreciate feedback too. So if you have any feedback about the show, you can do that right in the review too.

Julie: Alright, well enough of all that, I look forward to getting to chance, getting a chance, oh my goodness can't talk. I look forward to getting a chance to talk with you in next week's episode. But until next time, take care.

Julie: Thank you for listening. I am Julie Duffy Dillon, and this is the Find your Food Voice podcast. Ready to join the anti diet movement and take the food voice pledge? Go to julieduffydillon.com and sign your name to the growing list of people saying no to diets and yes to their own food voice. The Find Your Food Voice podcast is produced by me, Julie Duffy Dillon, and my team of kick ass folks. I couldn't make the show without Yeli Cruz, Assistant Producer and Resident Book Fiend. And Coleen Bremner, Customer Service Coordinator and professional Hype Master. Audio editing is from Toby Lyles at 24 Sound. Music is Fly Free by Hartley. Are you looking for episode transcripts? Get them at julieduffydillon.com, where you can also submit letters for the podcast, give us feedback, and sign the Food Voice pledge. We need your voice to end diet culture. We literally can't do this without you. Subscribe to the Find Your Food Voice podcast to get weekly inspiration and education on how we can defeat diet culture and reclaim our own food voice. I look forward to seeing you here next week for another episode of the Find Your Food Voice podcast. Take care.