

*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: Hey there. Welcome to episode 288 of the Find Your Food Voice podcast. I am Julie Duffy Dillon, registered dietitian and partner on your food peace journey. I am so glad you're here for this season six finale. And if you're new to the show, welcome. I was just interviewed on the Boob Sweat, coolest name ever for a podcast, the Boob Sweat podcast. And so you may have found me that way. If you haven't found me that way and you haven't listened to that episode, it was a really fun interview. I highly recommend it. Check it out, Boob Sweat. But if you are new to the show again, welcome. This is a show where listeners just like you who have a complicated relationship with food write in, and instead of writing to me, they write it to food or to their body or to diet culture or do anything like that. And we sift through it, examine it, talk through it, and then the food writes back and we want you to find new ways to recover your relationship with food, to find pleasure in eating and satisfaction, to feel at home in your body. All without dieting. All without diet culture. And so, we can all like really flip the script, we don't need to fix ourselves. We need to fix the world. But before we get to the, today's letter, and this letter, it meant so much to me, this letter means a lot. I can't wait to read it, and for you to move along with me as I am sifting through it. Um, but before we get to this episode's letter, a very quick word from our sponsor.

Julie (ad): This episode of the Find Your Food voice podcast is brought to you by my PCOS roadmap. If you live with PCOS, also known as polycystic ovary syndrome, well, I know you've been told you have to diet in order to properly manage this condition. Well, what do you do then, if you've been dieting your whole life, or you're recovering from an eating disorder and you can't go on another diet. Well, I know diets don't work for most people. So why would they work for PCOS? They don't. There is another way. You deserve to have permission to enjoy your food, and to recover your relationship with food just like everybody else. I have the first three steps to making peace with food in my PCOS roadmap, you can get to it and a number of other free downloads at [julieduffydillon.com/voice](http://julieduffydillon.com/voice). Again, it's at [julieduffydillon.com/voice](http://julieduffydillon.com/voice). There, you'll get my PCOS roadmap and many, many other free downloads. Again, it's at [julieduffydillon.com/voice](http://julieduffydillon.com/voice).

Julie: All right, let's get to this episode's letter.

Julie (as letter writer): Dear Food, I put a lot of power into you, and use you as a metaphor for my life. You make appearances everywhere. Sad times, happy times, celebrations, morning,

noon, and late night. I've listened to what people have said about you with trust that what they say is true. I have allowed people to convince me that you are not necessary, and a guilty pleasure. I've sat back while people talk about how many calories you have, how someone else they know with amazing willpower has cut you out entirely, and how another person they know sees too much of you. I've had to take a different approach in my life because of you. While I feel bitter that you caused so much controversy and animosity among people in my life, I'm learning to feel grateful for the opportunity you have given me to be strong and confident. You are expensive, many people say, but I say the real expense is actually not having you in my life at all. The paradox is that you cost so much, but not having you is just as costly. People talk about being frugal with you and not wasting you as if it is some kind of moral accolade. Since when have you, food, been so powerful? Can you just sit back, quiet down, and let the world turn as it should? With skeptical respect, Cindy.

Julie: Hey there, Cindy, thank you so much for this note. I am going to say something really bold here. I think your letter is one of the most important ones I've ever read. I have a hard time saying things that are all or nothing. So that's why I had to say one of the most, but like, this was really powerful for me to read. So I really appreciate it. It has really summed up so much of how I am seeing all of our collective complicated relationships with food with our bodies. Your note was very complicated. It was heavy, and I don't mean on like weighing on the scale heavy. But I have a feeling you, the listener, I have a feeling you felt that heaviness too, and it was heavy because it was so complicated. You know, food is everywhere, everywhere we wake up, we look at the fridge and we eat and then we decide what we were going to eat later. We pack it in a lunch and we made a pack for other people in our life too. And then we go to the grocery store and have to plan out menus, and then we need to make another meal and then we get hungry between the meals, we have to make some more, and then we have to decide what we're going to make for dinner, prep dinner, provide dinner, clean up after dinner, and then do it all again the next day. And then we drive down the road or walk down the street and we see food advertised everywhere. And not only do we see it, but we smell it, and it's everywhere, and then we talk to people and that's all people are talking about. Food is everywhere. We need it every day, many times a day. I often talk about how food and eating, it's like breathing, We need it every day, many times a day, and I don't know if you've ever had an issue with needing to catch your breath. Um, or just even thought about what it would be like to be swimming and then not be able to get above water and gasping for air and having to hold your breath for a really long time. But then finally, when you get to the surface, how you don't just take little breaths in and out without thinking about it like we normally would do, no, you're gasping. And for a while, food is the same way. I know food is around us, and the smells, and the, the sights, and we're having to make all these lists and plan and cook and clean. But when we go without it, it's not like it just goes back into that same hum. It's going to be a lot, because we need it all the time every day, many times every day. Unfortunately, food, although very much the same as breathing, and just our basic requirements for existence, has developed a different meaning in our world. It's still tethered to our requirements to exist as a human.

Julie: But yet, food has a different meaning, and letter writer, you describe so well how much effort we put into measuring and labeling and discussing and obsessing, and that even meeting our basic food needs is selfish, and maybe even gluttonous, and that we're wrong. We're bad. These are not big stretches. You know, these are almost like truth today, with eating certain

foods or behaving in a certain way around food, or living in a certain body, that it's selfish to feel pleasure with food, to feel satisfied with food, and ashamed of those who don't, and oh my gosh, the praising when people deny their basic food needs. With that being said, in like the next sentence, Cindy, you also talked about the gratitude that you have for food. So like, acknowledging all this complicated shit that we have with food and also need it to be alive, but yet gratitude for what it brings and acknowledging the need for it and that like, living without food is the real expense.

Julie: This note was so complicated, and I read it probably 10 times before. Like I was like, why does this mean so much to me right now? Why does this note almost bring me to tears? And it's because of that word, complicated. I often talk about how, how we relate to food is how we're relating to so many other things in life. And when I was reading your note, it was a metaphor for me too, for these complicated times that we're living in. It is so complicated right now, like, people are not safe, we are still living with this pandemic thing. And I think about like, I live in the US, and like the political climate's complicated. It seems like a minimization. Um, and I laugh not because it's funny, but just like, fuck, it's just a lot. It's a lot. And so, when I read this letter, it brought me in a way to feel like a more deep understanding of what I'm experiencing living my life right now. As I'm recording this, I'm recovering from COVID. So there's even like this literal kind of experience that I'm having, and I so appreciate this letter for that reason. Having this clarity brings meaning to me, and I hope it does for you as well, because again, how we relate to food is a mirror image for how we are relating to other things in our life. Other people, relationships, experiences, or just how we're living our life, and it's so messy. The last few sentences of your letter, letter writer, um, I wish I had you sitting across from me so we could talk about it, because you mentioned "I've had to take a different approach to my life because of you", and I'm so curious what that means. I know it can mean so many different things, and so, you know, I can, my mind can wander, I can sit and like, let myself tell myself stories about what certain things mean. And so, I let myself do this with this part.

Julie: So when you said, I've had to take a different approach to my life because of you, I was like, oh, I wonder if this person had to break up with a toxic partner because of their relationship with food, or because of how they were talking about people's bodies. Or are you recovering from an eating disorder, or were you studying to become a dietitian and then realized how fucked up all that stuff is? Or have you had to set some really hardcore boundaries with people in your life that were just not safe for you, or having all these conversations about food in order for you to heal your relationship with food, you had to set these boundaries. You know, that was something I was like, I wonder what it is. I wonder where this all could be, and it could be any of those, honestly, because for you, the listener, even though you didn't write the letter, you probably could really relate to that statement. I've had to take a different approach to my life because of you. It probably has changed relationships, or your job, or your interests, or what you would like to watch on TV, or who you listen to, how you spend your free time. So the ending is, I am having such a hard time putting this into words, and maybe part of that is COVID, but I think it's also because again, it's so complicated. But you asked food to sit down and be quiet. And I wonder if that's what you're craving from the world right now. Like less pain, less chaos, more order, more just like, predictability. Yeah. I'm wondering if you are just hoping that if food was easier, if food was just not as big of a deal, that everything else will just fucking be quiet.

Everything else will just get in line, or it will just be like one less thing to have to check off your list.

Julie: And I really don't think that would happen. Like, if we don't talk about how hard things are, if we speak up less, does that actually make the pain go away? If we ignore it, does that make it not there? If we lie about what's going on, does that make it easier? And I mean, I think we know, the answer I know to be true, but I know as it comes, as it relates to your relationship with food, as it relates to living in your body, in your one precious body that you have as you are living this life, acknowledging your truth has so much power. And that truth may change as you go through life rallying with other people who are doing the same, will bring so much meaning and sustainability to your truth. And so for you, letter writer, I hope you continue to connect with this messy, fucked up, complicated, beautiful existence that we are all trying to navigate. And I hope you keep writing about it, because that was one powerful letter for me, and I hope you stay connected to what fuels you to keep you going.

Julie: And same goes for you, listener. Thanks for sticking with me over all these seasons, six seasons, almost 300 episodes. I saw a lot of time of you and me talking, and I appreciate you trusting me to be in your ears in this intimate way. And listening to me talk about all these things that bring meaning to me as it relates to food and our world. Just know that's what fuels me, and that's what this letter did. So thank you Cindy, and thank you to everyone who has written letters so far, and those who are in the future. Thank you for fueling me, and I hope I can continue to fuel you.

Julie: So, I see that food has written back. But before we get to that letter, thank you for making this season six of Find Your Food Voice podcast so amazing, so wonderful. And like I said at the top of the show, there's going to be a very brief break before we get to season seven. And in the meantime, head on over to [julieduffydillon.com/voice](http://julieduffydillon.com/voice). You can get my PCOS roadmap and a bunch of other free downloads to kind of just tide you over, and I hope they bring you meaning and help your relationship with food along the way.

Julie: Alright, like I said, food has written back, but until next time, take care.

Julie (as food): Dear Cindy, thank you for this letter, and being so honest. Our relationship was never supposed to be this messy, complicated, or moralistic. It was supposed to be nourishing, pleasurable, satisfying, energizing, and fun. It was supposed to be just functional with times of goofiness. Yet the world has shaped our relationship to have a different meaning. Thank you for trying to make things more aligned. Thank you for not hiding from the truth. Thank you for taking the big hard steps. Even when you are alone in them. Keep acknowledging your truths, and rally with those doing the same. Stay connected to what fuels you, and we hope you never quiet about the [inaudible]. Love, food.

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](http://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

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