

You're listening to episode 111 of the Devoured podcast.

Welcome to Devoured, the podcast for women ready to release the title of dieter for good. I'm your host Lucia Hawley. And I'm a certified nutritional therapy practitioner with my master's in social work clinical mental health. I've lost 80 pounds, and I'm on a mission to get you into the life of your dreams without being the woman, who is consumed by diet after diet, trying to get there. If you're wanting more in your life and are tired of wondering when or how to make that happen, then this is a podcast for you. You'll learn how to make the radical changes you only dreamed of 100% possible for you today. I'm so happy you're here. The information provided within this podcast is intended as general education only, and is not to be considered a substitute for professional medical advice, diagnosis, or treatment.

All right, party people pooper poppers. That'll be short lived, but I just had to say it because I don't actually listen to my episodes very often after I record them. But I did listen to episode 110, so last week's episode, the day that it released. And so, that phrase is stuck in my head because I heard myself say it.

Welcome to this week's episode, Needing Comfort, what a subject. I think as the seasons change, and as the world continues to spin, this is a subject that I've noticed this week is the idea of comfort. What is it? How do we find it? What are we trying to give to ourselves? Do we have cups that are dry? Are we feeling like we're overextended? Are we the comfort offerers? Are we the comfort takers? Do we feel bad about taking comfort? Do we feel like we deserve comfort? All of that, that's a big subject. And that always comes up when we talk about food and nutrition. And, of course, if we talk about food and nutrition and over consumption of food, which is very often the cause of increased weight, which can feel not so great if you have a goal of losing weight, well, we have to talk about comfort.

So, let me start us off here. Let's think about the cup of creamy coffee in the morning, or the bowls of popcorn in the evening. For many of us, these are creature comforts. And for many of us, they can fall under the category of emotional eating. And I want you to know today that that's fine. They can offer us pleasure and insight into what we adore, what we find predictable, what we enjoy. So, when do these creature comforts derail us? When we're taking consistent action that doesn't align with our stated needs. And when we feel rigid in our thinking about why we're desiring the foods.

Because here is the thing, and this is what I think trips people up, if they've heard the anti-diabetic messaging, intuitive eating messaging, and they feel like they love that on principle, but it doesn't still work in their lives somehow, then they feel bad and guilty about that, but they feel like they're so over the strict, the pro-dieting rhetoric. Here's the thing, there is nothing wrong with creamy coffee, and there is absolutely nothing wrong with looking forward to it every day. Just like there's nothing wrong with bowls of popcorn in the evening. And there's absolutely nothing wrong with looking forward to those every day. Our food is emotional and it has to be, and it had to be. And it likely offered itself to you in a way that felt useful at a time. And so, what I want to posit today is maybe the disconnect, now, is that it buoys up your actions with certain foods. Those buoy up against your stated needs.

So, for context in Lean and Liberated, all we're practicing with the fasting, the intermittent fasting that we make plans for is an embrace of gentle hunger. There is no starving and there's no stress. We're not, not eating for the sake of not eating. That's gross you can make fasting a diet. I will always say that because it's 100% true. We don't do that though. So, there's no starving and there's no stress. But there may be brain tantrums. There may be all or nothing thinking. And that, both of them typically, come back to needing comfort.

And I'm going to use myself as an example for this. Now, you've probably heard on recent episodes that I recently have come off of coffee and chocolate, and that's not a new theme for me. Go listen to the episode, it has coffee and chocolate in the name, it's in one of the early hundreds. I've come off of

those. And so, we all have our own iterations of what's happening here. Anything I talk about on the podcast is from personal experience. I've lost the weight, I have the loose skin, I have stretch marks. I have foods that I love, I have foods that I don't want to love. I have foods that work well for me and some that don't work as well for me. And I hold space for all of them. And then, I talk about it here because I know it's a trip.

So, going to use myself as an example. I want to talk about why chocolate, which is a fermented food and I am sensitive to yeast so it's not just the chocolate itself. I actually have a physical reaction, and it's minor. It's not a true allergy, but it's present. Why chocolate was a comfort for me? And that is because I have a lived experience and belief about my energy needs as someone with Hashimoto's. Hashimoto's is an autoimmune attack on your thyroid gland. And your thyroid is your master energy regulator. So, when you talk about thyroid stuff, your thyroid, if it's hyperactive, you can be feeling jittery, you can feel, basically, hyper. Like your master energy regulator is like up-regulated. And on the flip side, if you're feeling hypo thyroid, you can feel like you don't have enough energy. Or that when you do hard things, then you pay a big price for it. So, I have a lived experience and belief because of those lived experiences about my own energy needs as someone with Hashimoto's.

So, not only does the sugar in chocolate give me quick energy and is delicious, yo that's there. But the theobromine, which is similar to like caffeine in coffee, the theobromine activates something in my body that I believe I need in order to get through my day. For a long time, I felt that coffee and chocolate were the two vices I would allow myself because for of those times that felt like balance. If I couldn't have this and I couldn't have that, and I couldn't have this and I couldn't have that, then I'll just keep in. I'll be good enough, but not so good I'll just keep in these two foods that kind of work for me. And that felt like balance for a long time. And that's fine.

But here's the thing though, it was an unbalanced balance because on the other side of it, after my experience of intaking a little bit of a stimulant, in this case in the chocolate, the theobromine, I was shaky, I was experiencing blood sugar drops. Over time because I was sensitive to the chocolate with the yeast on it, being a fermented product, I would have autoimmune skin flares that were painful. It's not just like a whitehead or a blackhead, painful skin flares. And I would feel panic because of how the theobromine actually functioned my body throughout the rest of the day, not just that initial hit of a little bit more energy, I would feel panic that [inaudible 00:08:25] me up by the afternoons.

I knew that by majorly reducing my interaction with chocolate, I would choose, perhaps, initially less energy, but I would also choose a much calmer experience in my days. Those foods were buffering my life for me because when I was choosing them, I was choosing to be dealing with more skin flares, more blood sugar drops, more panic every single day and feelings of shakiness and even dizziness. So, by choosing those foods, I was choosing to experience those, and have to manage them. It was a great way to not pay attention to other parts of my life. And I would feel victim because, oh my God, how restricting if I don't eat chocolate. Who am I? So, my brain would throw tantrums to try to explain those choices in.

So, while I don't have kids, I really want to ask, what do we typically do when a kid is throwing a tantrum? Do we tell them to shut up and do better? Do we tell them to not tantrum right now? Do we tell them that their needs are stupid? That the tantrum should be five full seconds at most, but most definitely not five full minutes, or 50 minutes. When that is occurring over the long-term, that is a basis of an unstable relationship, unstable attachment style. That is a basis of an unstable relationship and unstable attachment style when that occurs consistently over the long-term.

And listen, I get it. I know I don't have kids, but also I know that no one's a saint, and we all have flipped at having to hold space for someone's tantrum at some point or another. So, I'm saying with consistency, if that happens, if we do not honor that kid's needs and why they're throwing the tantrum,

what they're trying to express that's going to be shaky over the long-term. I'm not talking about the times where you're like, yo, you're a human, you're just trying to get by too.

So, is it any wonder then when we confront our own relationships to ourselves with something like over consumption, the eating of food and beverages beyond our needs to often mitigate feelings we aren't sure of, or are overwhelmed by in the moment. Is it any wonder that it feels like the safer option is to just keep the comfort going? Because listen, it very well might be.

I'll use another example of myself when I was 11, eating a bag of potato chips was a safe option to feel okay enough to get through the rest of my day. It might've led to stomach aches, but it also led to me feeling stuffed. Now, I may have wanted to be stuffed with love, but chips were an option available to me that I could offer to myself. So, I want to say how smart was that girl? I would give her the biggest hug today. I would tell her that she made the best choice for herself in the moment. And I would also tell my adult self, which hi, very meta, I tell myself this in real life, that she has every tool available to her beyond a bag of potato chips to meet her own needs now.

So, the comfort I may want now is an old one, but if I never feel the emptiness now, if I never allow the experience of that child, teen, or even an adult to be heard and to potentially throw a tantrum, I'm going to keep relying on old tricks. And I'm probably going to keep hating that I do that because that "isn't logical," or I should "know better as an adult" in the context of over-consumption and wanting to lose weight and feeling at odds. Listen, we're emotional creatures. And even the most logical of us, even the most driven of us, if you're like doing the Enneagram stuff, I don't care. Gretchen Rubin's four tendencies, I don't care. We are all emotional. And needing comfort is a human experience.

So, this week I want you to be with yourself in your actions, knowing that you do need comfort. But maybe boxing yourself into the bowls of popcorn or cups of creamy coffee isn't what will satiate you on that deeper level that you're looking for the comfort on. Maybe it's about being brave with the tantrums just this week. Just being with them, not trying to solve for them, not trying to out logic yourself, not trying to make a plan that looks good on paper, so you can do it for the sake of doing it. Let your brain take the space that it needs. Trusting that that is all it's been looking for this entire time. That you have the capacity for every feeling you could ever experience, and that nothing has gone wrong. That you are whole and complete on the good and the bad days, because there are going to be good days, and there are going to be bad days. I really want you to try that out this week.

To all my friends listening, I need you to take the space you need. I need you to not try to out logic yourself when it comes to comfort eating. When it comes to what we're looking for from certain types of foods that we feel like we cannot, or should not, or could not possibly have the experience of trying to figure out what that actual need might be beyond consuming the food itself. So, whether it's the bowls of popcorn, whether it's the Rice Krispie treats, whether it's the five portions of meatloaf, whatever the hell it is, like plug and play what it's going to be. Maybe it's not hyper palatable foods. Maybe it's more foods that just are beyond your needs in the moment, that is what's happening for a lot of us when we are in a place of over consumption.

Or when we're in a place of saying, "This food in actuality, in reality does not make me feel so good in the moment. Why do I ...? Why do I continue to eat it? Continue to drink it. Why can't I ...? Why do I not give a rip about coffee unless there's cream in it, but why do I feel like I have to have that in the morning? Why do I feel so lonely after dinner? Why am I scared of being hungry? What is the tantrum or the emotional experience that I'm looking to avoid? What is the actual comfort that I, as a human with real human needs, require right now?"

If you allow the space for your brain to play out the thing that you've been numbing or buffering away from, guess what? You will feel the feeling in the moment, and it will be big potentially. You don't have

to kid yourself. It doesn't have to look cute but, probably up until this point, it still hasn't looked cute. It still hasn't probably really worked for you. You might've just been getting by. And I want to remind you, again as someone who has experienced this quite a bit, is absolutely beautiful that you found a way to take care of yourself in a moment. And all that might be happening right now is that you no longer need to take care of yourself in that way. It might have been adaptive at one point. And now it's maladaptive. That mal does not mean bad, it just means it's no longer fitting for the moment.

So, you get to be the brave adult in a scary world who offers to herself the ability to say, "I am going to listen for my needs and I am not going to judge them. And if I do, I'm going to hold space for myself in that. I'm going to let it be," because when we let those feelings be, that's how we begin to process and move beyond these actions that we think are not so great.

So, the first step is remembering that nothing has gone wrong, that you were whole and complete on any day. You have the capacity for every feeling you could ever experience. If you don't believe me yet on that, that's okay. But you do have the capacity for every feeling that you could ever experience. You can trust that you can take the space that you need for these experiences because of the reality that nothing has gone wrong. I want you to try that out this week. Take the space you need.

Okay everyone, that's all for this week. Thank you for listening to this full podcast episode. If you want more of this information every day, instead of just one podcast episode each week, consider coming over to Instagram to hang out with me. I'm LuciaHawley\_ over there. That's L-U-C-I-A H-A-W-L-E-Y\_. And one more thing before this episode ends, please consider leaving a review of Devoured on iTunes, so we can keep spreading the word. And together we can offer this free education, empowerment, and liberatory nutrition principles that will change more lives. If you're someone who likes to empower other people, then please consider sharing this podcast with friends and family. And by leaving your review, it makes a world of difference.