

You're listening to episode 156 of the Devoured Podcast. Welcome to Devoured, the podcast for women like you, who have tried restrictive diet after diet and are ready for simple solutions and resources to help you lose weight for the last time, from a place of abundance and peace. If you're looking to end the yo-yo of comfort eating and rigid weight loss protocols and instead step into living your life on your terms while losing weight in the process, you're in the right place. I'm just sitting here at my computer, watching the people walk backwards, along the sidewalk in front of my window. Welcome to the show. I hope you all are having a wonderful week so far. I would like you to know, I've mentioned smell-o-vision a couple of times on Instagram recently, and I wish podcasts had smell-o-vision.

Because I would love for you to smell the lilacs that are in a vase in my office right now. I think I am drunk on lilac perfume, and I am so very here for that. Today on the show we are talking about, it's a conversation that I've been wanting to have for a while. And I don't think I had quite the right words for it and I think I have some of the words for it now. But we're going to be talking about diet culture and how it can be infiltrating our relational dynamics. And this is not a podcast where it's like, "Oh, no, one more thing on my to do list to try to fix or take care of." If you've been listening for a while, or if you're one of my clients who listens, you know that's not how we do things around here. We build awareness because education is empowerment. W.

hat can be sneaky when we learn about additional things, depending on how our brains are taking in that information and the pattern that they want to digest it through, what can happen is that we can start to filter information in a way that, and I think this clearly comes from diet culture. Not everything comes from diet culture, but damn, diet culture as I say, when you're going through Lean and Liberated, you learn diet culture is an extension of power and control culture. It's an arm of that. So a lot of stuff like I don't ever want that term diet culture to get overused. I try to use it sparingly, but it's this framework. It's this set of rhetoric around how people should or shouldn't be, especially often people who aren't White men. And I think that can just be a reality in our world and we don't need to hem and haw and converse all around it. It can simply be.

So when we're learning information, what I would love for all of you to always remember is that information is here to serve you and you are in charge of your actions. So if you ever feel like you are at information overload, that does not mean anything wrong about you, it doesn't mean anything wrong about the information is simply the intersection where it might not be the right time for you to be intaking information. There's nothing wrong with that. Think about when you go to bed at night, right? There can be a better time for something, a better time for something else. No big deal. Most of us, many of us, not all of us, many of us sleep when it's dark outside and we wake up and are active when it's light outside. Doesn't mean it's bad when other people don't do that. But commonly that's what is most supportive for a lot of humans, so we roll with it.

So just know, information and education is empowering. When I started my Essential Omnivore Food Blog way back in the day, and I was writing my bio, my about me page, I really remember it just sinking in really taking time with that about me page to share. Why is it that I felt so compelled to share about back in the day with gluten-free diets? I went gluten-free a long time ago before it was popular. I think it's really cool that it's popular now, that there's so much awareness around it, but I went gluten-free before. And I remember it was so life-changing and liberating for me to go gluten free, the panic attacks I had cleared up, anxiety attacks I had cleared up, the now I'm blanking on the name of the term, but I was having a lot of hive reactions even just to light touch or gardening, kneeling in the dirt, my knees would puff up. A lot of symptoms and signs of inflammation disappeared.

And that was truly life changing. It altered my life. I couldn't not not pay attention to it. So when I was writing that about me page on Essential Omnivore Food blog, recipe blog, I remember just coming back to the feeling of why I would write about gluten-free diets. It's not because everyone needs to be

gluten-free, who cares? It's not because everyone needs to cook as much as they can at home all the time. Who cares? It's about education. And it's about education in a way that adds joy and love and beauty. That was it for me with the food blog. I love the art of food. I love to taking that photo, right? I loved the play of the colors on the plate or in the bowl. I love the process of cooking, I still do. I still like to take photos here and there. It's about the beauty of really understanding.

Not only can we know what's happening on a deeper level, but we can take that, incorporate it and add more joy into our lives. No matter what the situation, happenstance might be. For any of you who are out there who have autoimmune considerations, maybe this resonates with you. For me, the autoimmunity that I experience or the chronic pain I have on my left side, of course there are days where it gets me down. I just had a day the other day where I was like, "I feel very overwhelmed by the different signs and symptoms that my body shows me." But it's such a distinctive. And if any of you want to hear about my story, I'll link. There to episodes where I share about myself. I acquired them last summer. They still apply. It was still my life. I just have a few more months of it now thankfully which is so cool. But education is empowerment. And empowerment, isn't that why we do any of this?

Why? When we're digging into why we want to lose weight, when we're digging into why we want to be more visible, why we want to not feel like we have to hide away. If we keep digging and digging, right? Why is that? What do you believe about that? What does that mean? How does that show up in your life? If we keep doing those digging questions, what we find is that all we all want often is to be more present and more loved in our lives. Whether by ourselves, by others, we want to feel more connected. We want to be in the moments in our lives. So use the education that you find, that you have the privilege of coming across or showing up to, use it and leverage it in ways that support you. And if you ever need to tune out and take a break, know that rest also serves you. Trust yourself that being in the rest times is what helps you grow and it helps you show up the next time.

Don't let burning out hold you back from the beautiful life that I know you want to be creating for yourself. That's the liberation. Liberation is not the scale weight, it really isn't. Liberation is not the one piece of clothing that you can fit back into. Those things are fun. They can be fun unapologetically, but fun stuff doesn't sustain us. We need fun. We need joy. What sustains us is freedom and education. Having your cups be full and then pouring into others, putting our oxygen masks on first and then helping others do the same. Those are the values I see in my community. The badassess that I get and have the privilege of talking with each week, whether in Lean and Liberated or in the DM's, or more and more in-person, what? Just kidding. I talk with Hazel. I'm too introverted to talk with other people. This has to be one of the longest intros I've ever done, but I just want to share with all of you.

And that sharing right there is part of what I believe is how we dismantle diet culture, diet culture is going to say that our communication, our ways of relating to one another are bad, right? You're bad for wanting to lose weight, you're bad for losing weight. You're bad for gaining weight. You're bad for maintaining weight. You're bad for not having enough muscle. You're bad for having too much muscle, right? You're bad for being too loud. You're bad for being too quiet. You should be different and when you become different, oh, that wasn't the type of different we were talking about. Diet culture is always turning the volume down on communication, and they can do that through an absence of education, an absence of information. And they can also do that and by they, I just mean these dynamics that large, which we'll talk about more as we get into this.

But the relational dynamics of diet culture can also be an overabundance of communication, too much communication. Communication that is confusing or overwhelming. This term is very popular now, so take it with a grain of salt, but information that can be gaslighting, right? That can make us doubt ourselves, so we feel like we're confusing ourselves. And we end our days just with, I don't know. So relational dynamics and how we can start to understand how we're engaging with other people, how

we're engaging with media, how we're just engaging and being in relation. That's all, I mean by this. How we're relating to other people, other places, other things, and what we notice when those are relating to us on the macro level, the mezzo level or the micro level, which I also teach about in Lean and Liberated.

The reason it can be so useful to start to notice, oh, golly, how am I interacting with other people or golly, why is it that when this one person interacts with me, I feel X, Y, and Z? What is that? These can be beautiful portals, doorways that we can open and walk through. Because very often, if we're feeling a confrontation with someone else and how they're relating to us, what they're choosing to share with us, how they're navigating their lives, what that brings up for us, that can be a really beautiful way to come into a deeper relationship with ourselves. And not that surface level like, "Oh, I'm self aware." That's great. Self awareness is that logical left brain activity. Awesome. But self awareness coupled with emotional safety around that self awareness, of really trusting our own lives, of really trusting that journey and that path.

And not just trusting it on a piece of paper, but trusting it in our hearts. Trusting it with our nervous systems. When we join forces with self awareness and we become in relationship with our self awareness, there is so much power there and the power is going to be different than what diet culture tells us and shows us power is. What does diet culture, patriarchal, capitalistic ways of being, what do those show us? And by the way, I'm not throwing any of that out with the bath water. I'm just using it as an example, because that's the primary in our current modern Western world. Those are the default settings. That's okay, they can be default. But I think a lot of us with thrive if they weren't, and that's why I bring it up. When we do that deeper work of asking ourselves, "How would I like to self define what power is? What taking charge is?"

That my friends is a very powerful question, because what I see and I'm going to be very upfront here. What I see is that often, I think for people who are on these journeys of self discovery or self inquiry of feeling confronted, let's say with diets even, what's really common there? When someone realizes that they've been steeping in diet culture there, and they don't want that anymore for whatever reasons they have, their first reaction might be to do the opposite. What is the opposite? Being anti-diet. Great, we can have that. But until we feel emotionally safe with diets, and we only feel safe with being anti diets, what we'll find and this is also something I teach in Lean and Liberated, what we'll find is that our attention will always be placed on the diets. When you're anti something, which is great, believe me.

Being anti, we need to be anti-racist. We need to keep shining the light on racism in order to get rid of it. But if you're anti-diet culture, just know what you're doing is you're continuing to shine a light on diets. So we can't not have our relationship with diet culture because we're still steeped in it. So what can become more useful is start to say, "How would I like to define the power that I do wield in the ways that I want it to express itself?" That's when diet culture loses its grip on us, because we're no longer playing within the realm of what is already defined as power, right? Being the loudest one in the room, stomping on another people. Using bullying techniques. Aggressive marketing. To move and change the game, we have to move through that phase of completely rejecting the game and then we have to come back and understand that it isn't about white knuckling and to not being within the game.

Our own freedom, our own liberatory life experience is saying, "The game is allowed to be played and I'm going to go continue to live my life here. Doesn't mean I don't have a relationship with the game. It just means that my attention isn't on that relationship." We can't make anything go away just by pretending that it doesn't exist. We have to be with the truths and the realities. And that is a part that often a lot of us need to grieve. We need to grieve that diet culture is real, power and control culture is real and they have hurt a lot of us. And they've hurt us from the tiniest paper cut to the biggest wound.

That's so often what I think is so reparative is that if we just deny that, try to stomp it out, that deeper healing isn't given a space, we aren't given a space to grieve. We just cut it off but it's short sided.

I think the longterm approach to health and wellness beyond diet culture, to health and wellness that is inherently a liberating experience is an acceptance of what is, because that allows us to step beyond. So being relational and what we notice when we're interacting with each other, when there are power dynamics that come up between certain people, when we're dropping into all or nothing thinking when we think it has to be this or that. When we're feeling like we have to be perfect, otherwise ... And the world is riding on our shoulders. And we have this mental filter, a negative bias. Do you see that it's the patterns that were existing in that if we step out of those patterns, that's then the real threat to diet culture because then diet culture doesn't have a say in what we're doing, right?

When we can fully love that those mental filters that others are engaging in have a negative bias. When we can love that there is going to be all or nothing thinking, it's not our job to get rid of it completely. It's just our job to be aware of it. When we can start to love that for ourselves, when we can love that when we see it in other people, that's when our shoulders will drop, our muscles will relax because feel safe. So I want all of you to know today that if things don't feel safe in terms of diet culture, that's okay. It's not your job to figure it out completely, logically or emotionally. It's just our job to start to show ourselves emotionally, physiologically and logically too. That we can coexist while these certain things are happening, we don't have to fight the truth and we can root into our own definitions of what do I find is power? What is that for me?

It might be different than what has been demonstrated and showed to me my whole life. Do I trust that it can be different? What is my definition of vulnerability? How would I like to show up to that? Where are the people who are engaging in this work? Where are the people who are engaging with their values? How am I in relation to any of that? What do these subjects mean to me? You see how we don't even have to touch the food on a lot of this stuff? The food starts to be secondary. When we shake out our nervous systems, often we can be shaking out years of tension that we've had to hold onto because it's been the safest option. See how education is empowerment? It doesn't even have to be specific things, right? You could be here being like, "Wait, what did Lucia actually say in any of that episode?"

It's concept is conceptual, but that's what we are. I think that's a beauty of being so human is that we have this ability to be conceptual. You have the ability to engage in art and music. You have the ability to be creative. When we allow that safety conceptually, to drop into our creativity. I think what a lot of you might find is that you get to create the capacity to trust that you are 100% whole in this moment, no exceptions. No matter what the story has been before, no matter what you think about the story from before, no matter what the future might be, no matter what the future and its story could be. No matter what you think about calories, no matter what's on your plate tomorrow for dinner. No matter whether it's a weekday or a weekend day.

When we dropped the shoulds and drop the labels and we think into looking at our relationships and how we're being relational to other people, to ourselves, to concepts, to irritants, to joys, to frustrations, to exacerbations, that's when we'll have a homecoming, because it's simple. And it's self directed. I think that is the safest thing. And I think that is something diet culture teaches us is not safe. You're not safe to trust your story. You're not safe to trust yourself. Don't trust yourself around food. Don't trust yourself around whatever, money, relationships, right? Don't trust yourself to be an entrepreneur. Don't trust yourself to sit on the couch. Don't trust yourself around the chocolate. Don't trust yourself to go to bed when you're tired, don't trust yourself to feed yourself when you're hungry. Don't trust, don't trust, don't trust.

When we drop the shoulds and we drop the labels, we sink into that self definition of, oh my gosh, it's actually up to me and that can be freeing, not a free fall. That's when we see that liberation was there

the entire time. And so, no, as you're listening to this podcast, this is how we co-create this beautiful new thing that isn't brand new, it's just allowed to resurface, this humanity is incredibly human what we do here. We're not joking anyone. We're not trying to move ourselves to be completely new people and reject the old identity. So much of some of this stuff can go in a really weird direction, quite frankly, I have lots of thoughts. But it's always about the humanity that is self directed from within, from you, for yourself, for yourself by yourself. It's that deep inner knowing, I can trust myself. I might not know everything.

I might not do all the things, but I can trust myself to be. That's going to be a beautiful way to turn the volume down on diet culture and just to let it be because it will be, I don't think it's going anywhere for the next couple of generations. It can't not. But as we show up to these subjects, I think that's what turns the volume down. And then we get to see all this. It's like going for a ride in the car, right? And you're trying to redesign so you turn the volume down on the radio. It's like that. When we turn down the volume on the stimulation of diet culture, we're able to see the signs more. We're able to what street we're driving on, where we're going. So I think I'd like to continue this subject in another episode. I want to perhaps offer you tangibles around this, but I wanted to lay the framework conceptually for what these dialogues can be.

This isn't uncommon in coaching sessions, that we start to dig into these deeper beliefs about ourselves, about our lives. Just like diet culture is an arm, is an extension, a power control culture, the specifics of whether we eat the chocolate or we don't, we do the diet or we don't, we hate ourselves, or we love ourselves. That's just the pinky on the arm that is an extension. It's a pinky on the arm of diet culture that is the extension of power and control culture. It's just a little offshoot. It's a sign. And you see how when we love that signs, there's so much possibility and potential instead of hating it or trying to get rid of it. It just naturally is and so are we. So take that, be with it this week and I will see you on the next episode. Did you know you can find more support from me on my website? Go to Lucia Hawley, L-U-C-I-A H-A-W-L-E-Y.com to connect.