

You're listening to episode 167 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. Okay, party people, my grape nuts, my bananas, what's going on? I'm going to be honest. I've tried to record this podcast six times now, and I'm surprising myself with that because usually when I sit down either have an outline for a podcast episode, or I've thought about the episode enough that I have an outline in my head about it, and this episode I've done both.

And yet, there's actually so much that I want to say, and I could focus on when it comes to this relationship that we have with our muscles. So in this episode, I wanted to be a primer. And I want to set the foundation that we all come to, not only our relationship with our fat mass in certain ways and in individual ways, but I want to offer to all of you that on the flip side of body fat, because we're not all just body fat, as much as your brain might be telling you a very untrue story about that, we also have our lean body mass. We have all the other parts of our bodies that are not the body fat. We have our bones, we have our organs. We have these beautiful pieces of our ourselves that often I think are put on the back burner.

And part of that back burner, especially when it comes to losing body fat and the conversations, the dialogues, the ways that we're told to think about body fat and how to interact with our system is that I think we're told it doesn't. If I really stepped back and I think about diet culture, part of the messaging of eat less, move more, the very basic one in one out of losing weight, we don't hear that if you eat less consistently over time and chronically your organs are actually going to down regulate their functions. And that's a really life saving thing that they do. Well, can you imagine that if you were to only have a down regulated organ system and process across the board, your brain down regulates, your intestines down regulate, all that stuff.

If we're down regulated in our life, gosh, that might mean that over time it would be more and more difficult to actually accomplish the things that we want, or to feel as able to be as present in our bodies as we might desire. Same goes for our muscle mass. We're chronically under feeding our bodies, we're chronically under emotional duress, which is chronic stress, and we're also maybe chronically stressing ourselves out physiologically like chronic cardio. This is not a recipe for a robust body that feels safe and able to express itself. That's actually a recipe for a body that doesn't feel so good. If you're not signaling to your body that you actually want to maintain your lean body mass, your muscle mass that you're starting with, and that you actually might want more muscle mass over the longterm, I just want you to think about the difference physiologically that occurs right there, regardless of calories.

Regardless of the scale weight, regardless of anything else. I want you to think about what that is signaling and actually signaling emotionally to when we decide to forget about our muscle mass. And the culture of dieting isn't really going to talk about our muscle mass aside from saying, "Don't get too much of it. You would be bulky, and that's a bad thing." So part of our story lining and story work when we're looking at saying, "What are the stories that have been given to me about me and my one life and what I do and how I look and how I perform and what I want? What parts of that story happen with my body beyond the fat mass?" Because there's also going to be this hyper focus on the fat mass that leaves the rest of ourselves untended for, un-cared for.

So on this episode, what I want to be taken away from it is just the ability to recognize that if you desire to think about these pieces of yourself, that's actually a really radical act too. And I think for me, where this episode, where I could go in so many different directions with it is that diet culture is an arm of power and control culture. Power control culture comes from patriarchal capitalistic ways of thinking

and being, and diet culture is not only just the foods on our plates. It's not only just about weight loss. To me, diet culture has a ripple effect in every single thing we do. So diet culture very often comes into the gym on both sides. And so, part of me wants to speak to my experience with that because I grew up with an identity of not being athletic at all.

I used to make HTML websites, I was super into just doing stuff, being in my brain and thinking on that stuff. I loved that stuff. And at the same time, I'd play some rec team or park teams boards and that was it, there just wasn't identity there. And over time, I cultivated, which surprised me once I found CrossFit, which was a decade ago now, the very first CrossFit gym I went to and found, by deciding to show up to a process of actually asking my muscles to be engaged and in fact, grow, right? By pushing them in a loving way. I developed this identity, that to me, felt athletic for me. And the reason I loved CrossFit at the time, and there's a whole journey there too, which I'll describe a little bit more in a minute, the reason I loved CrossFit is that the only person I was competitive with was myself, and that felt amazing.

It felt amazing to be put into a community because it's group classes, put into a community where you're there with other people, but you're all doing your own thing together. That felt really amazing because my thing was for me, by me, right? My whole life of having this identity that wasn't very athletic, but coming into an athletic box, I didn't have to try to chase after anyone else. Of course, people did and would attempt to and would use that for motivation, but for me individually, really coming into more of a relationship with the muscles on my body, right? What could they do? What was their potential? What did they tell me? I remember the first time I started to grow a bicep a couple months into my very first CrossFit that I was working out at and I was going maybe three times a week.

I remember I was falling asleep one night and I was like falling asleep on my arm, I was using my arm as a pillow briefly. And I remember getting really worried. I was like, "Oh my gosh, what is this lump? What is this mass? Uh-oh." And then I pressed it and I was like, "Oh my gosh, that's my bicep." I had never experienced a developed bicep like that before. So the reason I'm sharing this personal story and the reason I've been like, "How do I have this episode?" Is that what I noticed over time and for those who are newer to the podcast, so I worked out in different CrossFit gyms over the years, and then I also, once I was working with clients, I had this wonderful opportunity where I was able to work with my nutrition clients with a CrossFit gym. So I was a professional in a CrossFit gym, even though I was not a CrossFit certified coach, or doing any of that athletic portion.

I was doing nutrition and very often there was crossover with the CrossFit athletes themselves. So what I noticed though, in leaving CrossFit, which I left the year before I decided to move from Minneapolis to Portland, I left CrossFit very intentionally and it was a very personal choice. And the reason I left CrossFit is that I was noticing that diet culture, I don't think I totally had the right words at the time, but I was noticing that diet culture was cropping up in the physical pursuits, just like they crop up in nutritional pursuits. And y'all, I did not like that. I did not like noticing that I was in what felt like a pressure cooker of now keeping up with the Jones's, and keeping up with appearances, and all of those stories that can come with a culture of dieting.

And so, when I decided to step away, because I am a bit of a rebel and for those who listen and are into the Enneagram, I'm a type nine and I very much know I have an eight wing. I can get a little hot and salty because I'm a rebel and also a questioner. If things don't make sense to me, I rebel against them to give myself space to process them. How about that? And so, when I was feeling these pressures from the culture of dieting, I was like, not only am I going to step back as I was stepping back, I recognize I'm going to step really far back. And I gave myself about a year where I did not work out in terms of building muscles. I walked, I was active, I would bike, and then once I moved to Portland, I was in a new city and exploring.

So there was this shift of saying, "What if I don't pursue these muscles until I figure out my own relationship with this part of my body?" And that, my friends, provided me with so many insights over the years. And of course, there were ups and downs. When I came to Portland, I actually started working with a trainer who later on, I felt very uncomfortable in his presence. I felt there was some things that were inappropriate and so, I distanced myself from that and I needed a break from that. So of course, life is life. Things are not always so cut and dry. The next time I started working out in a gym just a few months later, something called the pandemic came up, right? Our life serves and these different opportunities to try things, go inward, try things, go inward, try things, go inward.

So I'm at a point now where last year in November 2020, I had a really big thyroid flare. And I've mentioned it just very gently here and there because I also don't love to identify with some parts of having an autoimmune disease that I think some people can use to un-empower themselves. I'm just here to listen to my body and what it shares with me. So last November, I got to a point where even going for a half mile walk suddenly was really difficult, and it was no longer filling my cup. I didn't have the energy for it. My muscles weren't feeling so good. And so, I had on top of a very big choice years prior to step away from a gym routine in order to give myself space, to tune out the noise and then certain attempts that worked and felt really awesome, and then I would step forward and would step back in terms of what felt like a linear progression.

What I started to realize with this last part that if we're talking about it in a linear sense, felt like many steps backwards with the auto immune flare, the thyroid, the Hashimoto's flare in November, what I realized from that is that, and I knew this, but I had to experience it is that none of this is linear. And if we're thinking that this is linear, what I want to offer to all of you is that that might be a sneaky form of shooting on ourselves, which is a sneaky form of diet culture. Telling us diet culture dialogues. And they might even be diet culture monologues because it's like the teacher from peanuts and [inaudible 00:13:01]. So I had to get really humble back in November, even though I'd already gotten really humble.

I'd had a lot of adrenal ups and downs the summer prior that actually started and this is where I haven't wanted to share this because it's like White girl needing White girl attention, not at all, but the news of George Floyd being murdered hit very close to home. That intersection where he was murdered I lived for multiple years just a block and a half away from there. My family was in Minneapolis, friends and family who were showing up to working and supporting those who needed aid on Lake Street. And so, being a sensitive soul, prior to that, I had been continuing the workouts I had been doing at that gym right before the pandemic hit and I just continued to do them at home. I thought I'd had everything figured out, right?

All right, can't go to the gym, I'll just do it at home. Listen, when your adrenal system serves you a big whammy of stress hormones, all of a sudden those other stressors that were at one point adaptive like strength training can then become maladaptive, they're too much and you need more rest, not more push. So that was a bit of a backtrack to fill you in with what had happened over that summer. But I'm sharing all of this to say at this point now, because of the ample amount of rest I've given myself, the rest that my ego gets pissed off about. The rest that on a linear track would say, "These are the steps back," what I want to offer to all of you in terms of the relationship we have with our other parts of our bodies beyond the fat mass, is that that's okay.

It gets to be part of the journey. And when it isn't allowed to be part of the journey of feeling that we're actually in this dance with our lives, that actually that desire for things to be linear of the yes, no, this or that, good, bad, forward, back. It is such a wonderful invitation into an even more robust relationship with ourselves. So if any of you have felt friction, especially over the last year where other stressors have been higher, because you've been managing through a very stressful for most of us experience what I

want to offer to you with that example of maybe offering more details, just to give you a fuller picture of what the last handful of years have been like. The reason I want to be offering this is to say, "And that's okay."

And I truly believe that because I've given myself this grace that at times I'm like, "Gosh, nails on the chalkboard. I'd really love to just have my routine, have it be good, not a problem, not have auto-immunity and not have the stress of 2020, blah, blah, blah, blah, blah," right? All the circumstances I would love for those to just not be things. Wouldn't it be so perfect? When did that mean that things would be easier? But if that were the case, then I would've missed out on all these opportunities where I could really tune in and listen to what is it that my muscles tell me? Why are they telling me that? Just like an episode before, right? We talk about hunger and appetite. What is my hunger telling me? What is it that this craving is showing me? What does it feel like to be satisfied?

How is my stress painting the picture across this day? What's it like after a night of beautiful sleep? What's it like after a night of not so great sleep? When we are allowing ourselves just to drop into the experience of our lives, that is a radical liberation. When we really get to say, "It's okay." And I think that sets the strong foundation, so that we are so much more tuned in as we continue along our paths. Because what I'll say now is that by giving myself this ample rest, the rest where I'm rolling my eyes at the type of rest that I need, right? Because I have assumptions about it. Now the opportunity is that I can show up in the gym, the home gym, and I can show up to long walks. I can show up to weights that stress my body out because my body can now recover, and that's what it needed before, instead of being pushed, it needed the push to be able to show itself that it could recover.

And so, I share this with all of you because I know a good handful of you who listen to the podcast, just a good handful of people who feel like there is a more consistent or chronic struggle with weight and conversations around that and what their bodies are doing. A lot of us who have these conversations do have thyroid considerations, whether that's Hashimoto's or hypothyroidism, thyroidectomy's, irradiated thyroid, whatever it is, that connection with our thyroids, that's why I want to be sharing this here is that it has to be more than calories in calories out when we're losing weight and that gets to be part of our liberation is saying, "Of course, it's more than that and nothing's gone wrong."

Because diet culture will tell us, "Something has gone wrong if it's more than calories in calories out." Now, remember everyone, calories in calories out is totally part of it. We don't negate that, but that's just one part of it. That's just like one part of the spice blend when we have this really robustly, deeply flavorful spice blend. Part of it might be this one flavor, but actually it's not the whole story and it can't be. It doesn't need to be. So there's so much fitness content out there and there's so much diet culture content out there. So as someone who now you know a bit more of my story and where I come from with moving my body and what that means and why it means these things, what I want to say from a very tangible point is that what if it gets to be simple with how you move your body?

What if all your body needs is just the inputs of it being shown what you're asking it to do? And I think that's quite a different way than how other people talk about it, right? They say, "Okay, strength training two to three times per week, get at least X amount of steps, 10,000 steps a day, make sure to get a rest day. But if you're active on your rest day, then that's okay too, and go be out in nature." To me, even that gets reductionistic, and it actually isn't simple enough. What I want you all to be thinking about this week is saying, "What is it that right now I'm signaling to my body? What am I signaling to my body this week? And if I would like to be the body that is expressing that it's being signaled something else I'm in the driver's seat to make that change."

So if you're constantly under eating and over cardioing yourself, guess what? Is your body representing that it's stressed out? Is it feeling tired and puffy and would rather eat carbs on the couch? What if, instead, if you're saying, "Well, I'd like to be leaner. So I'd like to lose body fat mass, I'd like to have a

robust metabolism," whatever your only job is to say, "And what are the inputs that make that happen," right? If I want to have a different body composition, what if it's not about reducing, reducing, what if it's actually about building and building that lean body mass?" And even not overtly of saying, "Well, I've got to be now the strongest person in the world," right?

That was a lot of the diet culture messaging that I stepped away from over the last handful of years, from that physical space, not from the food on my plate. What if it's not being about the best version of yourself, but it's just about being the most you version of yourself? And for my clients who listen to this, guess what? And for everyone else too, I have a whole episode on core values. I'll link that one in the show notes again. What that means when I say, what is the most you version of you? Is it going to come back to how are you living in accordance with your core values, right? So if you're signaling to your body be stressed out and one of your core values is calmness, what if the only reason it doesn't feel so good to be stressed out is just because it's misaligned?

Same thing with chasing a weight loss goal That's empty because it's just a number on the scale. The number on the scale is probably representing really deeply rooted things that you value, and those things that you value might be feeling more freedom in your body, right? And being more present. Dropping the should's as a society by not worrying about how you look, being proud of how you feel. If you really do the work this week and you can do it no matter what, you can always be doing it, if you do the work of tuning in and listening, it's not about finding one more plan. The plan is going to become apparent as you do this work. It's just like the food. The food stuff, the actual tangibles become apparent, and they're boring. They're very wholesome and boring.

Same with moving our bodies. It's not the excessive cardio that gets the job done, it's not even the excessive burn yourself out with all the strength training every single day. It's about the tender differences of saying, "What am I signaling to my body?" If I want to feel strong and proud, am I choosing over time, consistently, ways that my body can show up and get the signal that it's being challenged to be strong? From a metabolic standpoint, our muscle, our lean body mass, our muscle is a huge organ that requires plenty of food. So guess what? When we do decide to have more muscle mass, we're also deciding to change and shift our metabolic processes. When they become more robust, not only do we need to eat more food, we have to eat more food.

So we can have whole conversations around that too. All the emotions that come up when you're actually eating enough food. That's why in Lean and Liberated, I can't coach people just to eat keto, lose weight quickly, and drop all their muscle mass in the process. Can you lose weight sitting on the couch or in bed, never touching another cookie again? Of course. Is that actually teach you how to live your life? Not really. You have to learn how to be able to eat the foods in a balance that is sustainable for you, and the same thing happens with our physical health as well. Whether it's walking, biking, certain sports, endurance activities, strength activities, mobility activities, flexibility, gymnastics.

You just get to plug and play with what it is that you desire. So I hope this week, I offered a little bit of homework just a couple of minutes ago, but I hope this week, if nothing else, you are really allowing yourself to sink into your fortitude. That's the main difference between radicalizing yourself beyond diet culture, where diet culture was just a lens for you to look at your life, you radicalize beyond that saying, "Okay, thanks so much for that, and now I decide what it is I want to do."

That's the powerful work. That's the work that takes brain power, and that is the humbling work, my friends. That is a work that will always serve you no matter what. No matter what the circumstance is that you find yourself in, that work is that you are always a safe home to come into. That work is that you are always a safe home to come home to. So thank you so much for joining me on this episode and I will see you next week. Did 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.

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