

You're listening to episode 168 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.

All right. Party people. Party poppers. Welcome to another episode of The Devoured podcast. So happy you are here. I am coming to you from a rather warm Portland day. We are here. We have two days of a bunch of heat here in Portland, kind of a heat index that is rather high. But I will say the difference now, coming back to Portland than when I was in Minneapolis, I was in Minneapolis, in the Midwest for about five weeks through June and part of July. You all, I'm going to keep on talking about it. The difference between humidity and non humidity, woo, it makes it very easy to manage the warmth here in Portland, because it's not humid. We don't have any AC units. We just have some fans that we turn on and we shut the house down. We close the window shades once it really starts to hit peak heat.

So we are rocking and rolling with a couple of hot days. I hope your summers have been going well. Today, we're going to be talking about the difference between feeling safety with your food and feeling comfort with your food. I recently posted a video to TikTok, where I was talking about the idea that like, if you want to lose weight for life, you're actually going to have to work on feeling safe around your foods. And what I noticed in the comments of that TikTok video and I'm live right now on TikTok. So hi, to those who are watching. What I noticed is that there was some confusion or conflation of the idea that foods feel safe and that foods provide us comfort. So I wanted to dive and actually make a whole podcast episode on the difference between what feels safe with our foods and what is comforting with our foods.

Now, this is something that I notice a lot with clients. And I would say with anyone who has felt like their weight is a struggle and their weight is a struggle because of yo-yoing behavior. So you're either on the diet or you're off the diet, you're doing the diet, you're not doing the diet, right? So what's actually going on there, well, on the TikTok video. And for those who are watching TikTok right now, you can watch that video. In the TikTok video, what I was saying is that yo-yo dieting is not the root problem. Yo-yo dieting is a side effect, and it's a side effect of not feeling safe with our foods.

And so in today's episode, what I hope you all are going to take away from this episode is the understanding and the idea that safety is a different feeling than comfort. Many of us use food in order to comfort ourselves. And that's actually a really big strength for us in our lives. Many of us have a story where at some point in Lean and Liberated, there's a module that you go through at a certain point where you really start to dig into your history as you feel ready to, right, it's always for you by you, this entire process of losing weight for life.

So in this process, what gets to happen is that you get to do some storylining. And what that storylining is that you start to go back and even in one-on-one sessions, we start to notice that when we're digging into what it is that we believe about how weight loss works for us, where we're going with our lives, when we dig and dig and dig, we start to recognize that there are just some specific reference experiences that tend to crop up and again and again. And what a reference experience is, is maybe it was a phrase, something someone told you that really stuck with you. Maybe it was... Hey, there. Maybe it was your ability to look at the world with a certain lens because of what someone, either indirectly showed you about how the world works, what it means to be in your body. You being a kid who had a big appetite or whatever the specific instance is. The beautiful thing about this work is that we all have our own individual stories and they really are very unique.

So with our unique stories, we then are able to start to understand, what are the certain themes that we might be coming to because of the stories? And what we start to find very often is that we use foods to comfort ourselves. And how many of us have heard of the term, like comfort eating? Well, comfort eating is a form of taking care of ourselves that in the short term can usually buffer or numb certain emotions. Either the emotions feel too big. They feel too overwhelming. They feel like they're coming in at inappropriate times. We feel like we just need to be getting through our days. Or we feel like we've gotten through our day so much that now we comfort eat in order to buffer and unwind and give ourselves some sort of a transition from the difficulty of our days and to our evenings, what have you.

So the difference between comfort eating and feeling safe with our foods is that comfort eating is supporting us in the short-term. And even though at one point it was probably the most adaptive behavior that you had, meaning there was that reference experience where at some point reaching for the bag of potato chips actually gave you a break for the big emotions that you didn't know how to handle, because why would you? Where would you have learned that? You were probably fairly young when that was starting to happen and starting to become a pattern for you. We have to understand and love the idea that eating for comfort was probably really life-saving for us in a lot of ways. And all that's really happened is that that behavior was adaptive in the short term, in the moment, way back when. And now it's simply a not so useful habit that we're still engaging in from a nervous system perspective. Does that make sense?

When our nervous systems have these certain habits, then the comfort eating becomes uncomfortably comfortable because we can recognize from an analytical standpoint, man eating the bag of potato chips at the end of the day, the bowl of popcorn, whatever it is, doesn't feel so good. Why do I keep doing it? Logically, I know that it's not super helpful, but why is it that I keep doing that? Well, this my friend, is where it becomes really cool. Because that instance right there, that intersection is exactly where we start to understand that we have our analytical left brain and our emotional right brain.

So we can be doing things that are supportive for our analytical brain or are we can going to be doing things that are supportive for our emotional brain. And the other side of the brain is going to have an opinion about that. So when we're comfort eating, what we want to be making sure that we're doing is that we're not conflating it with eating because we feel safe. So eating for safety, like I was mentioning in that TikTok video, eating for safety often boils down to the fact that our food choices, more times than not are going to be fairly boring. If you really boil it down, also something that I teach in Lean and Liberated, if you actually boil down the basics of nutrition, the basics are really boring. You got to make sure that in general, you're eating some protein, in general, you're eating some fresh vegetables, in general, you're eating fresh fruit, in general, you're getting fiber and like kind of quality sources of starches.

And then generally you're getting some good, healthy quality fats. And then in general, you're eating while you're hungry. And you're stopping when you're full. Those are the basics of nutrition right there. It's very condensed and boil down, but that's pretty much what's happening. So if we feel like we cannot tend to those basics, it's not about us having to constrict or restrict ourselves even more. It's not about saying, man, I've got to find the more restrictive diet. I really shouldn't eat sugar. So if I tell myself I won't, then I won't. Right. Those are all coming to our food nutrition choices, from a place of a lack of safety. It's trying to reduce comfort, eating by saying, I no longer need to comfort myself. Well, that'll work in the short term, but in the longterm, it's not actually very life-giving.

So in order to feel safe with our foods, we have to understand why is it, and in what ways am I comforting myself with food? And the comforts might take a little bit of time just to be with quite frankly. I was talking with a client recently and especially when you're a smart bomb ass woman, which is all of the women I work with in Lean and Liberated. Many of us are going to be the people who feel

like we should have this stuff figured out, whether professionally, whether personally, because we like self-development, because we know this stuff analytically. But the difference here is really starting to say, would I like to allow my nervous system the space to express itself?

When we're guided by our nervous systems, instead of our analytical left brain or maybe the first time in our lives, or at least in this arena, one of the first times in our lives, right, we're not hyper managing with a diet or good food, bad food list. We're not going to know what's going to happen. When you're comfort eating and it's uncomfortably comfortable, it's very predictable. So not knowing what's going to happen can feel like one of the scariest, baddest things out there initially. And so this whole process, when I'm saying nervous system, and I'm saying safety, and I'm saying comfort, what I'm trying to express here is just the idea that we need to give ourselves time. We need to recognize that we probably know plenty and enough about food and nutrition from that tactical, tangible standpoint, the ins and outs of foods. And from there, we get to then ask ourselves, am I ready to feel safe with my foods?

And that then boils down to you, am I ready to listen to my nervous system? So for everyone listening this week, what if that just gets to be your homework? What if it's not about finding that perfect halfway through the summer diet, starting to come into the fall season diet? What if it's not about any of that stuff? And what if this time it really gets to be about like, what is my nervous system saying before I even make any changes to my food or nutrition? What actually is it that my nervous system is saying? Can I allow myself the space to come to that with curiosity, without having to fix it, without having to take care of it? Right. How many of us are go getters who make stuff happen, get things done? And that's a big part of our identities.

Even if it's your identity to get stuff done, to do stuff pretty darn well, to move on, do the things, I really want to actually like it's a bit of a challenge, I want challenge you to say, what if that's all good and fine, you don't have to negate that, but that can be a strength of yours. And additionally, you can provide yourself ample time for your nervous system to speak to you. The way that we do that is that we start to integrate coming back into the present moment. Because our nervous system might be talking to us about the past or the future, but our nervous system only talks to us in the present moment. It's like when you're having a conversation with someone, you might think about how the conversation is going to be tomorrow, or you might be thinking about the conversation from yesterday, but when you're actually having the conversation, that's happening in the moment, same with our nervous systems.

So instead of feeling like you have to be completely prepped, you have to know exactly here, here's my list of questions. I'm going to interview my nervous system. I need to get that information to get and get out. I want you to treat this like a conversation that you're having with a good friend, where your only job is just to arrive to the room together, where you're going to chat. And then you're just there to let conversation flow. And you know that when you're with a good friend, there might be an awkward moment where you both don't have anything to say and nothing's gone wrong. There might be a moment where you're both laughing so hard, you pee your pants and you know nothing's gone wrong. When you're having a conversation with a good friend, it just gets to be because you're there for the experience of the present moment.

That is exactly the type of feeling that like, if you're looking for like a way post or a signpost about what it's like to be in conversation with your nervous system, I want you to fall back on that example. You're nervous system is your friend and your buddy. It's been looking for a conversation, it's been hoping for one. And if you'd like to come to the present moment, you can. That means you're going to be noticing what is it that I'm feeling in this moment? And then you're going to let your nervous system talk.

There's no need to talk over it. There's no need to want to one up it. As you let your nervous system talk, it's going to share with you information. And your only job as it's friend is to listen and to support it.

So that's the difference between eating for safety and eating for comfort. That comfort and safety can occur at the same time because here's the deal. Let me also add in, once you played around with that and you've had that as homework, I want you to remember too, that there's absolutely nothing wrong with comfort eating. It was adaptive at one point. And quite frankly, as humans, we have plenty of tools that we can seek out and use for comfort. So there might be times in the future where you also want to eat for comfort, but the main goal and mission is that you have truly informed consent, that you are consenting to the type of comfort eating that you're engaging in.

Many of us, aren't actually recognizing that we're comfort eating without kind of authentic informed consent. So that's all that we're doing here, is that we're untangling, detangling, combing out paying attention, tending to our nervous systems. And from there, then we can have the rich conversations with them. Then our nervous systems can really actually tell us and have a conversation instead of us having a monologue or just like plugging our ears and never listening to what they're saying. So try that out this week, my friends. I'll see you all on next week's episode. Bye. 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.