

**Candice Schutter:** [00:00:00] Welcome back to The Deeper Pulse and the continuation of the 'cult'ure series.

Last week we pressed pause mid conversation, so today we're going to pick up right where we left off. But before we do, just a quick reminder that The Deeper Pulse is a platform for storytelling and self expression. The content provided here is entertaining, educational, and informative, but it is not intended as a substitute for medical advice or the support of a trained mental health professional. Every episode on this feed should really come with an insert that reads, *directions not included*.

And, as always, the stories and opinions shared are based on personal experience and are not intended to malign any individual, group, or organization. [00:01:00]

Thanks for tuning in. Let's get right to it.

Hey, y'all. Welcome back to the pod.

Last week, I shared part one of a two part conversation with Tara Wike. And if you didn't listen in, you're definitely going to want to circle back and start there.

In fact, episode 74 is already becoming another 'cult'ure series favorite. And I know this, somewhat prematurely, because so many of you have reached out to share how last week's episode impacted you personally. I really love hearing from listeners of the pod, and I thought you might too. So I requested permission from some folks to share their comments anonymously with you today.

Including one who writes:

"I've been obsessively listening and learning about diet culture and anti fat bias over the last couple of years during my own recovery. The 'rules', are so hard to unlearn! The most challenging piece for me is forgiving myself for [00:02:00] modeling to my children what I thought was *health* and was actually a disorder. Together we are relearning the joy of all kinds of food, and they are now seeing a mom who is listening to the wisdom of her body. Who is resting and eats lunch, and can even enjoy an ice cream with them. We can trust our bodies? Who knew? Not me, until now."

A former Org instructor shares:

"I came to the Org with an eating disorder and did a lot of work to heal it. But throughout my time there, I was exposed to insidious amounts of diet culture behavior; body shaming, disordered eating, body idealism. And I very much appreciated during the episode how much care you all took to name your privileges. Thank you. It's such an important part of the conversation.

It took me some time to learn that there is no 'look' to an eating disorder. Contrary to what we've been told, someone who has an ED doesn't appear [00:03:00] just one way. I say this only as it affects stigma and access to treatment. You can imagine a visit to the doctor's

office. 'You're not white, rail-thin, a teenager; you couldn't possibly have anorexia. Actually, you might want to consider losing a few pounds.' Can you imagine the harm?

Also, it's not better to have one eating disorder over another. And I think sometimes there's a ridiculous glorification of one and demonization of another. We all make judgments and have biases. That's the reality."

And here's one more:

"I loved this episode so much as a plus-sized fitness instructor. I'm very often the fattest person in the room when I facilitate a class. And I will say that the Org's teachings around body love, as they were written, not as they were transmitted or practically implemented, were transformative in changing my perspective. I think perhaps it was because my local teacher and mentor [00:04:00] was actually practicing a more inclusive methodology. And then I found myself first puzzled and then pissed when I got to Org HQ and the talking and the doing just didn't match. I'm still teaching dance fitness classes. And my class size has increased as my body has gotten bigger. Many, many of my students are inspired. Seeing a larger body be strong, moving with ease and grace."

I also heard from a couple of listeners who shared that, due to legitimate health concerns, they have been advised to eat certain foods only in moderation, or in some cases, not at all. And that in this way, restriction works for them.

And I just want to say that I hear this. And I feel it's super important to include these mentions, because I want to underscore that in this conversation, my guests and I are critiquing diet culture's obsessive reliance on restriction. But no one here is saying that restriction is in all cases a bad thing. [00:05:00]

Once again, and this has been an ongoing theme since this podcast's very conception, *never always*.

It's my hope that everything that's offered here is just fodder for your own critical inquiry. I want you to come to your own conclusions. If you've learned yourself the hard way, that it's just best for you to abstain from certain foods, all or some of the time. I get it. You do you.

In recent years, I've had to cut back significantly on red wine and most fried and spicy foods because GERD and esophageal mayhem runs in my family, on both sides. And so acid reflux is something I take care to avoid.

Having said that, deciding to cut out aggravating foods, for me that's a slippery slope. Because I have a long history with elimination diets. And for me, they can very often trigger preoccupation with what I'm putting into my body. In other words, I begin eating in a disordered way.

[00:06:00] Now, I don't have any life threatening food allergies, so I don't have a that's entirely off limits to me list. Nothing is demonized. Including the symptoms that I might

experience if I do decide to indulge in trigger foods. That's what works for me. I'm learning to trust my gut, quite literally.

Speaking of, in part one of this conversation, Tara Wike shared with us how intuitive eating has changed her relationship to food, her body, and her definition of beauty. Last week, she spoke about her intuitive eating practice, how it's all about recovering a sense of agency and trusting her body and her choices.

What if there are no formulas? Not only because bodies vary, but because if you step outside of most mainstream wellness circles, you'll find that choice itself is a freaking luxury. There are loads of folks out there living on very limited means, who are caring for others, working through mealtimes, and living in areas where wellness's prescribed, ideal food [00:07:00] options are readily unavailable.

These are hardships that I no longer face personally, but I can speak from prior first hand experience and say that quote unquote eating well, it's really not a top of mind consideration when you're financially in the red or dealing with a chronic health condition or just striving to get through the day without having a freaking panic attack.

The point is there are no easy answers here. And this is a hugely complex topic made even more so by systemic variables and intersectionality. And in a two hour conversation, all we can do is scratch the surface of that. Nothing we offer here is prescriptive.

Okay, let's zoom back in. Where were we? Ah yes, in the middle of a critique on diet culture and the culturally agreed upon narratives that drive it.

Most of us grew up in a culture where we're continually being schooled on what we should and shouldn't eat. And it can at first be a bit disconcerting [00:08:00] having open ended permission when it comes to what we put into our bodies. Without dietary rules to abide by, how will we even know what to do?

Intuitive eating relies on interoception, which is a fancy term that describes our "ability to perceive and identify sensations that arise from within the body."

And at the Org, interoception was the primary focus of the first level of training. Our number one objective as practitioners and teachers was to embody and encourage sensory awareness. To help ourselves and others find infinite new ways to connect with it.

*Tune into sensation and sense your body as you move through the space around you. Seek pleasure as you dance. Move in a way that feels good.*

Now back in the day in 2001 when I found the practice, this was all very profound to me at the time. Healing, in fact. I've spoke about it in previous episodes. How remarkable it was to [00:09:00] suddenly feel and sense my body.

But was I really learning how to become actively responsive to it?

I'm not really sure how to answer this question, considering the fact that I'd very often overlook, for example, the way my heart raced whenever I stepped into the training space. I'd ignore the anxious knot in my belly when Marissa would speak to me. And I'd swallow my anger when I would watch one of my coworkers being called out for their refusal or in some cases hardwired inability to conform to all the many rules that were left unspoken.

My point is this. When something felt oppressive or off to me, thanks to my budding body awareness, I felt it. But at the same time, in these social environments, I very often didn't change my behavior as a result. I went along in order to get along. I did, as was expected of me. I'd push through the discomfort or spiritually bypass the emotional red [00:10:00] flags that were waving inside of me.

All in the name of personal power, aka self control.

Wellness influencers will tell you that it's all an inside job.

But you know what? Not so much.

Now this can *feel* very true when you have privilege and easier access to resources and influence. But when you're on a health and wellness journey and so many things are outside of your control, wellness cult ideals can be damaging and harmful. When you're blamed and shamed for not conforming to impossible standards, where do you go for support? Because we are relational creatures who rely on psychosocial connection. Same as we do food and water.

And when we can't find a safe and welcoming space, is it really any wonder that we fall prey to incessant messaging that tells us that it's us, rather than the [00:11:00] culture around us, that needs to change?

Diet culture pretends to be the health that so many of us are in earnest committed to. And the two are such a tangled mess that it's going to take us all a while to pick it apart.

Last spring, I began leading dance fitness classes again. And I'm striving to do things differently. Kicking against my prior conditioning and doing what I can to learn from those who are creating safe and inclusive environments. And Tara Wike is someone who is ahead of me on that particular path.

And I'm so excited to share the second half of our conversation with you.

Tracy Stamper once again joins us.

**Tara Wike:** One of the biggest parts of my recovery other than learning how to do intuitive eating was to change my visual diet of the types of bodies that I look at.[00:12:00] And this was advised in the therapy that I received from the Be Nourished women who were interviewed in the, that Dear Sugar podcast. And it, this was maybe the most profound thing that I did was to go and find people on Instagram. I know this is going to sound superficial, but to find folks on Instagram who are proudly, you know, exhibiting their joy in their

various types of bodies. Young and old, all different colors and abilities and sizes. And for me, it was important to see women in larger bodies than mine, enjoying them, and understanding that beauty has a lot of looks.

And that's been one of the biggest gifts to me is that I realized that my definition of beauty was a bias that was imprinted on me by the culture. And that, you know, it was so narrow.

It was so narrow.

**Tracy Stamper:** Literally.

**Tara Wike:** That I, yeah.

Literally.

**Candice Schutter:** Exactly.

**Tara Wike:** And, and it was a gift to myself to see more beauty. I [00:13:00] see more beauty in the world now. I see it. And that's one thing that as an Org teacher or a teacher of that kind of a practice, I had that already. There was a seed of that. Because there's something really magical about watching somebody move authentically, right. In their. You know, just because of how it feels, not because of how it looks.

And then when you can apply the decoration on that, which is just that all these bodies are beautiful. Um, I hope you can hear my, the genuineness of what, how I'm saying this, because this is how I bring it to my class. And, and I will go so far as to say, even if you're not loving your body right now, I am. And, and that's what, that's I think a very powerful thing that we can bring.

If we can get there ourselves. It has to be genuine. You know, this is one of the issues with the body positivity movement. It's, oh, just say an affirmation, love your body.

**Candice Schutter:** Right.

**Tara Wike:** That's a tall order.

**Candice Schutter:** Right, right. And another way that it's co opted [00:14:00] also is that to be body positive is to approach the body with purity. Rather than accepting the full spectrum of the human expression, right.

So I think about an Org class and the mixed messages. You know, this is something that we can dig a little bit deeper into here. We've alluded to in quite a few episodes of like, what gives with this whole very genuine, talk about intention, of loving our bodies, accepting the way they move. All bodies can experience joy and pleasure, and let's focus on that.

And we've all, I'm sure I can speak for all three of us. We've all had very, very sincere and earnest experiences of this within ourselves doing the practice and in a room full of people in that, sort of head space. Which is beautiful.

And then running concurrently to that is this culture of pedestalizing certain folks that fit the out-there cultural norms of what the ideal body is. And those are the people we [00:15:00] see. Those are the people that get attention. Those are the people whose classes are full. And then those expectations, understandably, are internalized. We don't need it to be plainly spoken what the expectation is. It's implied.

I will say, you know, coming from the world of the Org practice, going into like Zumba land, for example. There was a distinct difference in terms of the way teachers would talk about their bodies in front of their classes. And I was stunned when I went into a Zumba class, and the teachers were, it was like right around the holidays. And they were like, okay, we got to do this, this, and this because we're going to eat pumpkin pie.

You know? And I was just like, what?

And I realized what a blessing it was that I had that reaction. Like, what are you talking about? We don't say that. Like, what are you thinking? I got that from the Org culture. We were much more conscientious about that kind of thing.

So there's, I think it's worth us just teasing out a little bit, the three of us, this mixed message. And like, how these [00:16:00] two things can be happening simultaneously. This healthist, undercurrent of stigmatizing bodies, that like it's an inside job to make your body the way that it needs to be. It's a moral obligation all that stuff. But then simultaneously this message of body acceptance.

**Tara Wike:** I think, I'm just off the cuff here, but I like to think we're in a transitional moment now about all of this. And a lot of younger folks are way more pro body diversity than, than older folks, I'll be honest.

And when we think of the founders of the Org and what culture they came from, 1980s aerobics. Right. It's no wonder. And they, they kind of had to have the physiques that they had to have success in that business. And, and these are like I was talking about before, the folks who benefit from thin privilege aren't going to so readily give that away, right.

And so I think, we have started to see a little bit more diversity on that front, not huge. [00:17:00] Um, but in the, in the last few years, I'm out more recently than you all, there have been some Org routines and things that are done by people in a variety of body types and sizes and.

**Candice Schutter:** Great.

**Tara Wike:** And so I think there's steps being taken. I think it's a transitional, I think it's a transitional thing. And it might have to do with personalities at the top.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah. Yeah. Right.

And the, I don't want to harp on this, but I think it would be, um, a glaring blind spot to just not mention. And with honestly, with a heart full of compassion in terms of why the why around it all. Like what you were just saying, like the fitness culture that the founders were building their business in and the pressures around that. The fact that in addition to, you know, extreme dieting and detox culture, we see things like plastic surgery. We see things showing up in the higher echelon of the practice and how that trickles down and the message that that sends.

And again, having deep [00:18:00] compassion for what's guiding those choices. And, and those are choices, you know, we, we all get to make. But it's like that thing where they say about parenting, your kids are gonna do what you do not what you say.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** It's that same thing. It's like you can speak as much as you want about body acceptance. But if what you're demonstrating is that you need to change your body again and again and again in order to accept it, then that's the message that I'm going to internalize.

**Tracy Stamper:** Mm hmm.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, and I'll be honest. When people would ask me more about the Org, you know, get curious after a class and say, hey, where can I do more of this stuff? How can I learn more? I wouldn't send them to our website. I had certain select links to things that I would send. But because our website was showcasing people with, like you mentioned, very obvious plastic surgery. And this, to me, wasn't resonant with the message we were trying to get across.

And I knew that the audience that I had, they would most likely receive that in a not positive way. And then be like, wait, what is [00:19:00] this culty practice?

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** To be perfectly honest. Um, yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.

**Tracy Stamper:** And it's that dissonance of hearing one thing, of lip service being paid to this, and then seeing something that is really difficult to integrate. You know, how do I integrate everything that I'm learning and everything that I'm so excited about with what I'm seeing of visible plastic surgery. It's just confusing.

And I, again, like Candice, I always want to come from a place of compassion.

**Tara Wike:** Hate the game not the player.

**Tracy Stamper:** Exactly.

And to be learning and really excited about something and then just to, it's just what you were talking about earlier. It's like, oh, not this shit again. Not this shit again.

It's like, we think we're doing something different. And peel away the layers. And it's that [00:20:00] fear and restriction and judgment and morality tied into body size.

**Candice Schutter:** Tracy, I'm curious, what was your experience around these issues as a trainer? Did you feel pressure in terms of conforming to certain body, how does all this land in terms of your journey at the Org?

**Tracy Stamper:** So as we're talking, I flashed back a few times on being in a circle with trainers. And actually, there was a portion of our trainer training where Marissa did discuss not being happy in her then body and wanting to lose 15 pounds. And how *that* would make her a better walking advertisement for the practice.

**Candice Schutter:** Mm.

**Tracy Stamper:** So it's about being the brand, looking the [00:21:00] brand. We were spoken to as if there was predetermined agreement that smaller, thinner bodies are better.

**Candice Schutter:** Mm hmm.

**Tracy Stamper:** It's just that was kind of the given behind this. Which, it was very confusing when we're drawn to something calling itself the love your body workout.

**Tara Wike:** And, and the irony, the irony in this is that, she's not entirely wrong. Because probably to, to attract the people who need this message the most, you would need to have this idealized body to get them in the door. Uh, almost a bait and switch to be like, haha, actually, you're going to just feel your body and love your body.

And, you know, here we.

**Candice Schutter:** Mm hmm. Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. So it's nuances, right? It's shades of gray.

**Candice Schutter:** And that's the mindfuck of it, of really understanding it's not... and this is where [00:22:00] it's like, I feel like a constant redirect that I have to do, because of indoctrination in the larger culture and in wellness culture.



I'm constantly like, oh, there it is again, is... "it's an inside job." Like, Marissa really needs to get her shit together around blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. It's like, she's delivering this message in a culture that it is literally true that if she wants to sell her product, she needs to center certain bodies.

Now that's starting to change, thankfully, but that was the reality for many, many years. And it is in a lot of circles still. Like people are gonna go to the practice where they see the picture of the ideal body, quote unquote, as they've been taught. That's what I want, that's what I'm after.

So it is kind of a funny bait and switch, cause the story that they're telling themselves is, oh, we're using these ideal bodies to get people in the door so that then they can then accept their bodies.

And it's like, well, how exactly is that supposed to work? Especially when, within the culture itself, we have [00:23:00] stories of, being on ATO and hearing just story after story of, you know, people being in communities where the trainers or the teachers "above" them, I'm putting that in quotes in terms of the rank, the hierarchy, are prescribing certain diets to the people they work with in their community. Maybe not to students directly. There might be an implication of that to students, of course, when they go in and talk about their latest detox. But actually advising other teachers.

We also have heard stories of a trainer who measures out their meal portions. And you learn these things about people's eating habits. Once you learn them, how are you not supposed to internalize that as a suggestion when they are supposedly of a higher rank.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. And I and yeah. I had a training where the trainer wouldn't eat all day.

**Candice Schutter:** The whole day?

**Tara Wike:** And, the whole day. I think they ate once a day, you know. And maybe wouldn't say anything about it. But [00:24:00] if everyone else is kind of having their snack and the trainer is just.

And there's this.

**Candice Schutter:** It's a source of pride though. Like in the group that I was in I remember one day, the facilitator was talking about how they hadn't eaten anything all day. And I remember thinking, wow, she thinks this is what she needs to say. Because I know she had a snack.

And maybe she just forgot. So I'm not saying that she was deliberately trying to deceive them. But there's a source of, a sense of pride. Like I have, look at how I deprive myself.

And I have colleague, a former colleague who does these water fasts and posts about it on social media all the time. Like she's so proud of herself for doing these water fasts.

**Tara Wike:** Well, if you do a water fast in the woods and no one's there to hear it. Did you really do a water fast?

Honestly, so... in this day and age, it's so performative sometimes.

**Candice Schutter:** It's so performative. You're right.

**Tara Wike:** And [00:25:00] what, and you have to, you know, then you do the, the five whys. Like, but why, but why, but why, why, why are you? You know, what is it that you're trying to prove or project to yourself or to others by performing this, right?

I have control over my body.

**Candice Schutter:** That's it. That's the control. It's my ability to transcend my humanity.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** My cravings. My hunger.

I mean, and that's the thing where it's it really is like what you said when you peel back the layers, Tracy. Like, oh my god, this is the same shit. It's all this gauzy spiritualese all around it, but underneath it. It's like oh, yeah women have been starving themselves for always.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. It's submission.

**Candice Schutter:** It's submission. It's obedience. Exactly.

**Tracy Stamper:** It's

**Candice Schutter:** Wow.

**Tracy Stamper:** Foot Binding. It's

**Candice Schutter:** It's foot binding. Yep.

**Tracy Stamper:** Making ourselves smaller. It's containing. It's shrinking. It's taking our immense and vast creative potential and focusing it into [00:26:00] food choices.

**Tara Wike:** And it's shaming our desires and shaming our cravings, right?

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes.

**Candice Schutter:** That's right.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes.

**Candice Schutter:** We internalize these messages to such a degree that we are... you know, it's like I often joke, the cult leader lives inside of us. It's like we're our own...

I mean, I have been way harder on my body than anybody ever outside of me, ever, in a million years could be.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** The things that I have said to myself about myself. I mean, it's, it's heartbreaking to me. Which is the, the repairing that I'm doing now.

**Tara Wike:** you That can, I can tell you that can change. It takes work. But it's so, it's so worth it.

## MUSIC TRANSITION

**Candice Schutter:** One of the quotes in the Dear [00:27:00] Sugars podcast. And, and I want to apologize in advance because there are two wonderful women. Will you say their names please.

**Tara Wike:** Oh, Hilary Kinavey and Dana Sturtevant.

**Candice Schutter:** Yes.

**Tara Wike:** I'm pretty certain that's their names. Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** And I want to apologize because I wrote these quotes down. And I can't, I couldn't quite. I don't know them well enough. I couldn't like, is this Dana or is this Hillary that's speaking? So I'm not sure. It was one of the two of them.

But one of the things that, well, there was a few quotes that I wrote down that were beautiful.

One was, "what am I trying to control in my life that I might be projecting onto my body?" That was just really powerful for me.

And then, "somehow, we never end up talking about the social determinants of health. We simply focus on health behaviors, and that is a problem."

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes.

**Candice Schutter:** Can we speak about this for a minute, because I think it's really important.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. So, um, people love to try to quantify what health is and what are the factors of it and what's within our control and what isn't. And I can, [00:28:00] I actually did a presentation for my son's third grade class, like back in the day, just trying to, basically trying to head off or circumvent any morality around food messages that they were going to get.

They were about to do a unit in health. And fortunately, we're in Denmark and it's not as fat phobic, uh, in some ways the medical system is unfortunately. But the education system isn't. I've heard about folks in America who have BMI report cards and that.

Research what the BMI is and where it came from. Uh, uh,

**Candice Schutter:** It's bullshit.

**Tara Wike:** Aubrey Gordon does a great takedown of it in *Maintenance Phase*. It is beyond bullshit. And especially when applied to children whose, whose bodies vary and, and change constantly.

But, anyway, I, I tried to teach them about, you know, how can you tell by looking at someone if they're healthy or not? And ultimately it's, you can't. You cannot. And there's so many factors. And how do you even define health anyway?

But, the social determinants of health being what is your [00:29:00] socioeconomic status? What marginalization and levels of oppression do you experience in your life? How safe is your neighborhood? You know, can you go out for a walk? There's all these things. It's like, why can't you just go for a walk?

Yeah. Some people can't go out for a walk.

**Candice Schutter:** Uh Uh huh.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** You know, or what is your, you know, they're still learning so much about generational trauma and epigenetics and how, you know, later generations are responding to things that previous generations endured. And, um, you know, sustaining adipose tissue in your body is effectively a survival tactic that our bodies evolved to do for millennia. But we demonize it now. But it's, you know, I'm not a scientist, but as I understand it, there are situations where, you know, certain circumstance will inspire certain genes to turn on or turn off if they think they're necessary for survival.

And that's maybe one explanation for why bodies are getting somewhat larger. It is not an epidemic. That's a whole other thing to unpack. [00:30:00]

It could also be we have food abundance, whereas we haven't past. But, it's to say that there's a lot of reasons. And now I'm getting back into body size because I, there's my bias, thinking

about body size and health. But again, health, you could be healthy in a large body and unhealthy in a small body.

**Candice Schutter:** Mmhm.

**Tara Wike:** And I think what they're getting at. And I can't, you're right, I can't remember if it was Hilary or Dana who said that about social determinants. A lot of prescription about what we should do about our health has to do with our own choices in lifestyle, uh, you know, and behavior.

And that's all well and good if everything is fine for you on the home front. And, but, the fact is, is we could do a lot better for people's health and safety if we could have safe neighborhoods for them to walk in, right. Or better public transportation. Or community gatherings where you felt safe to come and dance and move. Uh, you know, or if we had better access to fresh food in food deserts.

It's, uh, you know, things like this [00:31:00] that would take a huge stride. But instead it's no, everybody needs to watch what they eat and, and.

**Candice Schutter:** Uh huh.

**Tara Wike:** Eat less and whatever.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** So societally, it's kind of putting it on the individual. Which is also again, culturally a very American thing, this American exceptionalism.

Because when I hear. And I, this was the same for me, I think back in the day, one of the things that should convince everybody that diets don't work is this massive meta study, uh, 2007 from UCLA that compiled any valid diet data they could find and basically showed that for 95 to 98 percent of people who undergo a diet. It might work in the short term, but, work meaning drop weight. But, it will fail within five years and usually much less than five years.

But I find that so many people think, well, that's that 95. I'm the 3%, you know. I'm the

**Candice Schutter:** Uhuh.

**Tracy Stamper:** I'm the exception.

**Tara Wike:** I'll figure it out. That's not a problem. I don't mind those odds. You know, cause nobody wants to think that they're the masses.

**Candice Schutter:** Well, and [00:32:00] also you're entering into.

I mean, it's, I remember so many times when I, like, say I would go camping. There are no mirrors. For days, I just get in this cool relationship with my body. Where like, I'm just, I'm just an animal, like animaling. And I eat what I want. And I'm not, it's just like, I don't care. I'm not showering. It's just, whatever.

So maybe I would have a moment like that, you know, or a, a season of feeling really good in my body. And then ultimately, because I was working in wellness, I would continually go into health clubs and dance studios and yoga studios and all these places. And even when I was telling myself a better story, I'm constantly bombarded with images of women who are starving themselves. And I'm comparing myself to them. I can't stop comparing myself to them. No matter how many affirmations I do or whatever.

**Tara Wike:** Or women who naturally have thinner bodies who that are being spotlighted in that space. Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** Or [00:33:00] that too. Exactly.

And honestly, most of the time, the women who had thinner bodies were the ones starving themselves, ironically. So I never really knew. Like, how much of this is?

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, no.

**Candice Schutter:** So that was part of the mind fuck was like, well, maybe they look like that because they're starving themselves.

Right?

**Tara Wike:** And there's a presumption by a lot of those women that if they stopped starving themselves, they would become huge. And they likely wouldn't. Like, bodies tend to stay within a bit of a range, you know, give, you know, except in certain circumstances. For the most part, they know what size they want to be.

**Candice Schutter:** Right. Right. Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** And it's not necessarily what's been prescribed by a Belgian statistician from 150 years ago in the BMI, like.

**Tracy Stamper:** Shocking.

**Candice Schutter:** Right. Who was, do I have this right? I think Aubrey Gordon was the one I heard this from. But that they were basing it on white men in the military?

**Tara Wike:** It was white men. I can't remember if they were military. It was young [00:34:00] white men, you know. And it was not intended to say anything about health. I don't know, it was just a weird demographic study that he wanted to apply certain, like

actuarial facts to. And it was never meant to be used as an individual. Like, well, unless you're this BMI, then you're

**Candice Schutter:** Right.

**Tara Wike:** a problem.

But it was something that insurance companies found that they could use to, um, to....

**Tracy Stamper:** Bully.

**Tara Wike:** Bully. Or, you know, charge more money to certain

**Candice Schutter:** Deny coverage to certain people, charge more money.

**Tara Wike:** And then in the 90s, a roomful of like, nine people, I think mostly white men, some of whom were heading up pharma companies and weight watchers, decided to lower the numbers for the different categories. Um, so that they could prescribe more weight loss meds or shame more people into.

**Tracy Stamper:** Ooh,

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, because a lot of the stats around what, if you decide you want to correlate body size with health, one of the stats that they have is that, the lowest morbidity, so you're least [00:35:00] likely to die, is somewhere in the overweight range. So how does that make sense?

So like, if you want to say that's the healthier way, then. Yeah, it's, it makes no sense. It's, it's completely, it's pure.

**Tracy Stamper:** Bullshit.

**Tara Wike:** Patriarchal, capitalist bullshit.

**Candice Schutter:** Well, and a lot of, and again, those of you who aren't familiar with Aubrey Gordon, you got to check her out. She's amazing. We'll link to her books. But there was also, she just did an interview on, um, We Can Do Hard Things. It's where I recently heard her. I've heard her in a few different places.

But one of the things that she was speaking to in terms of health determinants and these correlations. Again, correlation not causation. Is like a lot of the time when they link certain health outcomes to weight, there's this overlooking of this huge variable, which is that when folks come in who are in bigger bodies to see doctors, the doctors often do not actually try to diagnose what's going on. They just *assume* that it is because of their weight.

And they don't get treatment that they need. And like, there's just all [00:36:00] these stories of diagnoses just being overlooked. And they're not even investigating because they're like, oh, it must be because of weight. Because this bias. It's just so deep. It's just so deep in the psyche. And it stems from, actually eugenics. There's a really fascinating chapter in the Conspirituality book on what they call body fascism. And like the roots of western wellness obsession with certain bodies. And how it's, uh, actually born out of the eugenics movement and white supremacy.

**Tara Wike:** Fear Of The Black Body is also another really good book. Sabrina Strings, I think. And Christy Harrison's Anti-Diet Book goes into the whole history of it. It's really fascinating.

**Candice Schutter:** Mhm. It Yeah, it is.

And it's important that we explore history so we understand how. Just like with the 'culture series. It's like we, why I'm so hungry to go deeper into understanding. I was like, how do we understand the water we're swimming in? How do we understand the indoctrination and the spells that we're under?

Like we have to really know where they came from. [00:37:00] And they got passed down to us and how we've internalized them and how deep they go. So that we can... A lot of times what's been called white fragility around things, which is a term that's debated for understandable reasons. But the fragility often is a function of ignorance. And a lack of curiosity and a sense of like internalizing again that morality, which is a function of white supremacy.

Like, oh, I've done a bad thing, so now I'm just going to shut down and I'm going to stop engaging in critical inquiry. It's like, we have to push through that and continue to educate ourselves. And I've found that the more education I have, the less charged all of this is. It's just it. You know what I mean? It's like.

**Tara Wike:** Naturally, we did what we did before because of the culture we were in. And now we understand it differently. So naturally, we're going to consider different options.

**Candice Schutter:** That's right. Exactly.

**Tara Wike:** No judgment.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah, no judgment.

**Tracy Stamper:** I would love to share something on the no judgment front that Tara, I've noticed that you've said this three times. And I love it so much. [00:38:00] You have referred to adipose tissue.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.



**Tracy Stamper:** I just adore that. So I remember learning when I was studying anatomy and health. I remember reading about fat, adipose tissue. And I remember really being struck by it's simply a type of tissue. That's all it is. It's just a type of tissue, that obviously our body needs otherwise we wouldn't have it.

So I decided, what would happen if instead of using the word fat, I just replaced it with adipose tissue? So I did that for a while until the word fat just started to lose its luster.

I just didn't. It's just fat. It's just adipose tissue.

**Tara Wike:** And what we did, we charged so many, like, sugar.

Sugar. There I said it, too. Well.

Yeah.

**Tracy Stamper:** I [00:39:00] just, I really loved hearing you say that.

**Tara Wike:** That's all it is. I mean, we, we have the power to imbue these words with power. And we also have the power to diffuse them. But it takes conscious effort.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah. And really thinking about, like you were saying, Tara, impact. You know, like the impact of our judgments on words. And how we are ultimately saying, if that word is something you are, then I have thus demonized it. I have thus made it this thing that I'm terrified of. I reject. That I think is inferior in some way.

Like being super conscientious around like the language. Because I've internalized a message around them. Right. And that we're inadvertently and ironically, walking around, which this is kind of gets my goat a little bit.

The whole thing of like, no judgment, no judgment, no judgment. Like, I feel like we get a little bit caught in that cause it's like, okay, you know what? Like, we judge. That's what [00:40:00] our brains do. I'm working on letting go of that one, you've heard me talk about it before, Tracy, where I'm like, this whole like, not judging. It's like, you know what, I'm just going to own that I'm judging.

I am judging. My brain judges, it categorizes, it sorts. And now I want to, I want to critique the way that I'm judging. And is this a, a,

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, I think that's what can be meant sometimes by no judgment is like, let's actively try to not judge.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah. But it's also like, how do we learn about our biases and our ignorances without acknowledging our judgments? So I think, again, it's another high-minded thing that, I'll just speak for myself. For me, it's a high-minded thing that I do to deal with the shame that I feel around judgment. By being like, well, this isn't a judgment, but.

It's like, well, what if I just said, this is a judgment and let's look at it. Let's interrogate it together. Like, really scrutinize it. And say like, well, how do we feel about the judgment that I just made? You know, like that's, I just, I just think it's more honest. Like [00:41:00] I'm working towards getting there.

Because I don't know. I just, I feel like the more we reject that we do something, the more we're likely to do it. That's been true for me.

**Tara Wike:** What you resist persists. It goes back.

**Candice Schutter:** That kind of thing. Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** To mental restriction.

**Candice Schutter:** Fascinating.

**Tracy Stamper:** And if you just call it discernment. You're allowed to discern. You're just not allowed to judge.

**Candice Schutter:** Right. Yeah, it's just semantics. And it's like, well, because I haven't been allowed to judge, I have not allowed myself outrage around racism. You see what I'm saying?

**Tara Wike:** Sure. Or you haven't allowed yourself to critique or criticize or even be curious or question, you know.

Like, or pick things apart. Like, I'm going back to that pumpkin pie Zumba comment. So like, but what did that mean? What was, what was the opposite of that? Like, okay, if we don't then burn off these calories, the risk is that we're gonna eat pumpkin pie and, maybe there'll be, you know, too many calories that our body then converts to adipose tissue. And makes us [00:42:00] larger. And that's clearly unacceptable. Like, you know, it's the why, why, why, why, why. Right?

And like, what if we just removed that? Then we have no reason to freak out about having an extra piece of pie.

**Candice Schutter:** Exactly.

And, then, what happens in the room, and I think this is a great, you know, sort of circles us back to how can we do it different. It's like, what happens in the room when somebody says something like that?

It's like immediately, I pulled up all the scripts and all the narratives around judging my body. As soon as the teacher said that. Whereas I was just lost in the joy of moving and feeling and just being like, wow, I can like kick some ass in here. I love Zumba, because you can get pretty fiery, you know. Like I'm just in this like hip hop movement.

I remember it was hip hop. I remember it that vividly. It was a hip hop movement. And I remember being like, I was just in this place of feeling the energy of ferocity and the strength of my body and the you know, this hard hitting movement. And now I'm thinking about if I'm going to get fat from Thanksgiving. [00:43:00] Like, why do we need to insert that?

But it's like our own, I love this term. Um, I'm not, probably not using exactly how she means it. But I just thought it was, it was brilliant that Aubrey Gordon uses, *thinsecurity*. Like I'm just protecting, I'm just projecting my thinsecurity onto the rest of the room where we're all.

It's like, I'm reminding everyone that they're actually here to lose weight.

**Tara Wike:** Right.

**Candice Schutter:** That's what I've just done. I've just reminded the whole room that that's why we're really here. We're telling ourselves this other story, but that's why we're really here.

When in fact I came to the class because I love to dance, right? And so for me, I feel like whether what I call it, judgment, discernment, or critical inquiry, really looking at that. Asking questions about like, wait a second, why did she say that? And is that the message that I want to send? No, I want to send the opposite message.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** [00:44:00] And then if this is like the first time you're hearing stuff like this, it's probably. I'm sure there's cognitive dissonance and being like but too much pie! But not enough movement!

But what about? But what about?

And I think we need to turn that down a few notches and just say, no one act of eating a piece of pie is gonna make you or break you. And having this anxiety around it, it is gonna have mental and physical effects. Right?

Whereas accepting that food is more than just fuel for your movement and for your body. Uh, it's joy. It's sharing. It's celebration. It's social. It's cultural, you know.

It's sometimes compassionate, you know. Sometimes it's the only self care we can give ourselves in a moment is, you know what, I'm just gonna have this cookie right now. Because I had a tough day. And, and it's, it's yummy and I, and I want it. And even that's been demonized and [00:45:00] that's, you know, come on.

There's a lot worse vices out there if you want to go ahead and label it a vice.

**Tracy Stamper:** Thank you.

I am so glad that this came up. Because something that I've wanted to, you know, since we're here with you. And Tara, you've done so much work on this. It's just, oh, it's so exciting to me.

**Tara Wike:** I'm glad, I'm happy to be able to share it. It's a little excessive just for myself, but yeah.

**Tracy Stamper:** Oh, that's the way I roll, by the way. More is more. I go deep, too.

I have been really thinking about the term emotional eating for the last year or so and how demonized that has been.

**Tara Wike:** Well, emotion. First of all, very female and weak.

**Candice Schutter:** Uhhuh.

**Tracy Stamper:** Very, very scary, those females.

It's really fascinating to me. It seems that there's such a generally accepted belief [00:46:00] that we are *not* to emotionally eat. Emotional eating is bad.

Which really is a conundrum, since we are emotional beings and we need food in order to survive as the emotional beings we are.

Can you help me untangle that from?

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. No. Well, I think.

You know, we eat for a lot of reasons, right? And more than just because we're hungry. You know, we eat if we are joining friends and somebody has made us something they want us to try. Or we eat, like I said, the other day, I wasn't hungry for breakfast, but I knew I was going to go run this race. So, okay, I'm being practical. Let's just go ahead and do this. I know it'll help me.

And we eat sometimes because we had a shitty day, and there's a yummy cookie. And that's a moment of joy that we know we can, we can have that diet culture would love to rob us of. But, you [00:47:00] know, it, it, it is what it is.

And, and a lot of times people, you know, what gets termed binge eating, emotional eating, for many people, that's just a reaction to restriction. And we want to put a label on it and demonize it and explain why it's happening, when one of the very likely reasons it's happening is because you haven't had enough to eat. Right?

You know, um, another one that's fun to dig into is the 2000 calories a day myth. Again, based on white men. And I think they found that they ate on average, it was somewhere between 2400 and 2500 calories. So then they decided that the whole world should eat that much. But they didn't want to go ahead and say that high number because then people would go, you know.

**Candice Schutter:** Well, and women can't have as much as men, so.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, and so they said, we're just going to round down to 2000. And, and, and then they just put this arbitrary number. Which is actually too low for most people. And you're going to need different amounts every day anyway, depending on what you did and what you're doing, and, you know, how your day went.

Um, but because of this. Because of things like [00:48:00] that. And because of all the fucking... This makes me crazy in this country. I've been in the U. S. for the last few weeks. All of the calorie counts on everything, on menus, like, this is not helpful, okay?

So you might have been making choices all day long given this charged shaming information, and your, you know, embedded biases and everything. And what you ultimately did was not eat enough food.

**Candice Schutter:** Mm hmm.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** And then you're stressed out. And maybe you're stressed out just because you're hungry. Maybe you're stressed out for other reasons, I don't know. But then you get home, and you see that box of Oreos or whatever, and, and you go for it.

And it's, well, it's emotional eating. Or it's unbinging. Or it's, you know, all this stuff. You probably just didn't eat enough.

And, you know, even if not, there's nothing wrong with having a moment of joy of tasting something that's delicious that your body likes.

**Candice Schutter:** Well, and also I love this, this piece that you spoke to, Tara, that I also heard in the interviews has been really key for me, of really understanding that when you grab the [00:49:00] Oreos, whether you've eaten enough or you haven't. If it's an issue of you need more calories. Is it emotional eating? Whatever it is. That when you have a story that this is the last time I can have this. Because we have this ideal that we're trying to live to, which is that I'm not going to ever do this again. I'm never going to do this again.

That you automatically binge. You automatically are like, well, I'm going to have as much as I can. Because I've just kicked in this like, deprivation mechanism.

**Tracy Stamper:** Ugh.

**Candice Schutter:** And that tracks for me for sure.

And I noticed that yesterday when I was making cookies. I told you all the whole story. And I made the cookies and I always eat cookie dough, cause I love it. And so I was eating a little bit of cookie dough. And the familiar thing kicked in of like, you really shouldn't be eating this cookie dough. You shouldn't.

And I was just like, I can have this cookie dough whenever I want. I want to make cookie dough tomorrow and eat it, I can. Next week. And it really, I'm not gonna say it was like an immediate like cure [00:50:00] all and that the shame wasn't there. But like it deadened it like immediately. I was just like, oh. I can have this whenever I want.

Okay, I'm gonna cover it up now. And I'm gonna put it in the fridge. And I'll cook the cookies later.

**Tara Wike:** It takes the. And it's, it's funny, it's a weird, I hate to say this, but it's almost a mixed blessing. Because I remember after having done some, you know, cleanse, whatever, that first bite of cookie dough, man.

**Candice Schutter:** Mm hmm.

**Tara Wike:** That is delicious. But then, when the, you know, when all bets are off and you can have cookie dough whenever. Sometimes you're like, ah, no, that would give me... like, I, all these things, like, uh, turns out, I don't know how you all feel. But Hershey's chocolate is disgusting.

**Candice Schutter:** I agree.

**Tracy Stamper:** Mmhm.

**Tara Wike:** But it used to be like, ooh, Hershey's kiss, ooh, you know. But now, like, I had one the other day and I was like, ugh. This is, what is this? This is gross. I'll go have some good chocolate, you know.

So it really, I mean, things physiologically change. Things change in your experience of food when [00:51:00] you don't romanticize it or make it the forbidden fruit or whatever. And you kind of lose some of the joy. And I think there's like a lot of people who become foodies. And who like get really into this stuff, because they've had this dance with food. And, you know, when they finally get to have this illicit thing, it's this, you know, magical experience.

Um, so I had my relationship with food has changed so, so drastically. And then interestingly, I had a, um. I had a head injury a few years ago. It destroyed my sense of smell. I like did damage to my olfactory nerves. And so suddenly I couldn't taste the flavor in food. I could still taste sweet, salty, sour, bitter, umami. But I couldn't tell the difference between vanilla and chocolate. And, uh, it was profound. It was really, really devastating, um, as far as a sensory loss.

And I've been on a recovery journey. I've been through anosmia and paraosmia, which is like couldn't smell and then was smelling things weird. A lot of people who had COVID has a similar thing. Mine was to to a [00:52:00] brain injury.

But um, I'm now fortunately almost fully recovered. There's still certain things that smell and taste crazy. But for a long time, I dropped a lot of weight because I wasn't getting that joy from food.

And what broke my heart is how many people said, "oh, lucky you."

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes.

**Candice Schutter:** Wow. Wow. They would say that to you?

**Tara Wike:** Oh, oh. And I, and well. And, and I was already fully a, you know, intuitive eater. And I was like, we're going to have a talk right now.

**Candice Schutter:** Uh huh.

**Tara Wike:** You just opened the door to something because.

**Candice Schutter:** So let's, Let's talk about that for a second.

How do you, because if we want to change a culture, we have to talk to the people within our culture about these things.

So when somebody says something like that to you. How do you kindly, without sounding like a, like we're sort of preaching. Cause it's like, activism can be tricky, I guess is what I'm saying. In terms of like, we can fall into culty patterns, too.

[00:53:00] So how do you have that conversation? Like, what would you say in a moment like that?

**Tara Wike:** I wish I could say that I had like a canned response that was really thoughtful. But it's usually driven by whatever emotion is in the moment or what relationship I have to the person.

Um, but I will point out, you know, I like to say, actually, you know, I don't, I don't have good or bad foods. Um, I trust my body. Or I'm working on trusting my body to make the right choices on that front. I don't, you know, see any.

Cause it was, it was, for some reason the big focus was on chocolate. It was like, oh, I wish I didn't like chocolate. Or I wish I couldn't taste chocolate.

And I would just be like, that is the saddest thing I've ever heard. I miss nothing more than tasting chocolate. I would never wish this on my worst enemy. Please don't.

And you know, and there's something about, um, you know, if I had lost my sight or my hearing, you know, people wouldn't be that.

**Candice Schutter:** Right. What a great point.

**Tracy Stamper:** Right.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. But, but I, it depends on who the [00:54:00] person is and where they're at. Um, but I, you know, people hear more than they want to from me sometimes, because I'll unload. Or I'll share lots, I'll share my thoughts in a, in a mail later. Say, hey, remember that thing you said to me earlier? Here's some links.

Um, and again, for a lot of people, they're not ready to hear it. Or they're not willing to step away from thin privilege. And it's just, okay, there's Tara talking about her anti-diet stuff.

But for every maybe five or six people who are like this to me about it, I've got another person who's like, wait, what? You don't have to worry about chocolate. Hold on. Hold the phone. And they'll have a moment, you know, like you did. And that makes it all worth it me.

**Tracy Stamper:** When it comes to having lost the sense of taste and smell at different times and how that happened to folks during COVID, some folks who had COVID. I cannot tell you how many times I heard that very [00:55:00] comment about, oh man, I would love to lose my sense of taste. Give me three good months. I'd get down to my ideal weight.

I heard that so many times that it, it just, it was very illuminating for me.

And I think that's part of why I've been wanting to dive into emotional eating. Because you know what? Tasting chocolate is so pleasurable.

**Candice Schutter:** Absolutely.

**Tara Wike:** Yes.

**Tracy Stamper:** I love my chocolate. And emotional eating. Like, that's a gift that I can give myself at times.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah. It's one of the loveliest forms of self compassion or self care.

**Candice Schutter:** Well, and what's, my eyes have been so open to so much of this for so long and yet I still fell in the hole. Which is why I always like to share with people when I've fallen in the hole. Because it's there, built into the culture.

Um, but like, I remember sharing with Chris many times. And I say sharing with Chris, because [00:56:00] it helps me to say things out loud. I'm a verbal processor. It makes it more real.



**Tara Wike:** Same.

**Candice Schutter:** When I would have be struggling with my, my body changing, perimenopausal weight gain, all the things. And I would say to him, you know, but I love my body. And I just have to keep telling myself, the thing that keeps coming up for me is, those pants that I still have in my closet that I fucking won't seem to get rid of for whatever reason that are still in my goddamn closet. The only way, most likely, that I'm ever going to fit in those pants again, is if I'm sick.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** If I'm unwell. And that I continually remind myself, like this glorification of thin, at what cost? And if the cost is my health, I choose my health.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** I choose my health.

**Tara Wike:** And I wish that was true for everybody. But there are many people who will not take a medication if it causes weight gain even if it is a medication that's going to help them relieve pain or other [00:57:00] symptoms. You know, I have people close to me and my family who got pain relief from a medication, but refuse to take it for that reason.

That's how deep it runs in our culture. Right?

I'm so glad you make the choice for health, though. And that's just it. For so, for so many people, if sudden or extreme weight loss happened, that would not be a good sign.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yes.

**Tara Wike:** That's really a good sign, right. And, and yet we are, we are primed to applaud it. You know, hey, great, oh look at you, you shrunk. You know, good job. You look great.

**Candice Schutter:** Good job. Exactly.

**Tracy Stamper:** I actually can so distinctly remember I used to teach Org practice in a health club. And I so, so clearly remember this day. And I, I've talked about this. I don't know if it was on the main feed or on Patreon, but I had come back to teaching after a couple of weeks. I had been out with the flu. Flu knocked me on my ass. [00:58:00] And I came back to teaching, and I shared with the class that I was recovering from not feeling great. So I was going to take it easy. I'm taking care of myself. They can take care of themselves, do whatever they want.

And so my fellow dancers knew that I had been not well, that I had been sick. I looked a little bit gaunt. I didn't really look like myself. I was on my thinner end, because of the flu.

So I remember standing, after class, talking with folks who knew that I had had the flu. And I received praise for looking so great. And I'm thinking, what are you not seeing? Because I look a little bit green. There's no color in my face. I felt weak and tired.

I'm like, I can look at myself and see, this is, this is not healthy. This is, I'm not feeling great and that's reflected in my image. And at the [00:59:00] same time, other folks were simply looking at the fact that you could see a little more bone and praising me. And I'm thinking it was flu. It was nothing that I.

Don't congratulate me on getting the flu, please.

**Tara Wike:** And that's, and that's a case where if you.

So if that had been me, my very outspoken, you know, activist mindset, and somebody had come and, you know. And I did, I lost weight when I lost my smell. And, um, for anybody who said anything like that, I would say this is not a healthy size for me.

And that's maybe enough to say. You know, to be like, wait a minute. What do you mean? Is there healthy sizes that are different for different people? And

**Candice Schutter:** Mmhmm.

**Tara Wike:** You know, I thought there was one size that we all had to be.

You know, that's enough there to maybe change or cause a little bit of a record scratch for, for somebody. And to stand up for yourself and say, okay, you know.

And it's not demonizing what they've said. It's just saying, now I'm going to [01:00:00] state a truth about me, which is this is not a healthy size for me.

**Candice Schutter:** It's a great response.

**Tracy Stamper:** It's really interesting to hear that response, because it didn't even occur to me to respond.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.

Yeah, no, I mean, what do you do with that? Right. And I, and I'm not, I, I, by no means, I'm saying you should have said this. I'm just saying that's maybe what would have come to me. I would like to think, something like that.

But that's so understandable. And that, of course, tells you about that person, right? And, and I think if you're in a vulnerable place, you might also take that on. And then say, oh, do they prefer the size of me sick than the size me healthy?

Which is, this is a struggle for a lot of people in larger bodies who lose weight and then inevitably regain, because their body is recovering from that restriction. And they heard all the praise that they got when they were smaller, and thinking, oh, well, now I'm gonna be the size that people didn't prefer.

And, you know, which is why I will never praise weight loss. Even if somebody worked their ass. You know, [01:01:00] did some extreme thing, and put all kinds of energy into it. I am never gonna say good for you.

And I, and I've had, I have people in my family who do this, repeatedly. And you know, I have had to explain to them. I love you. You are beautiful whatever size you are. Okay? That is how I see you. And, you know, if you are feeling good about yourself, then I'm happy. That's great. I'm never gonna, you know, tell you one type of body is better for you than another. I'm just not gonna do that. Because I don't think it's helpful. And they get it.

But it can look a little bit, if everybody's standing around, you're all out at dinner, and your friend shows up in her new size whatever body, and everybody's going, oh look at you, you did great!

And you're sitting there going.

You, you can look like an asshole, but that's pffft.

**Candice Schutter:** I just had that experience actually, recently. And really it was sort of like a fascination watching people respond and celebrate the individual's accomplishment.

And I also felt, okay, so all these tracks are running. I also [01:02:00] felt a sense of envy. If I'm being honest. Of like, Oh my God, like, look at that. Look at how much she shrunk herself. Maybe I should be shrinking myself. Like, oh, really, I need to take this whole shrinking of myself thing seriously again.

**Tara Wike:** Look at how the culture loves it.

**Candice Schutter:** Yes, exactly.

Even though while I was sitting there looking at her, I was feeling concern. Envy because culture. But what was most prominent for me was like, oh gosh, Ozempic, Wegovy. Is this something that she should really be doing every week? Like in her body? Like, is it really worth this?

And okay, I'm going to go home and starve myself now. Bye.

Like, Right. It's like, all true.

**Tara Wike:** The logic. Yeah. Yeah.

**Tracy Stamper:** The timing for this chat really was perfect, wasn't it?

**Candice Schutter:** Say, yeah. I mean, I just feel so like grateful. Just so grateful.

**Tara Wike:** [01:03:00] And I wish I could tell you it's gonna just be all easy from here. But no. Like any, like cult recovery, like any. And this And this is recovery, right, you know, we have suffered. We've been victims of this culture. So it's, it's recovery, what I'm hoping people find, what I have found. But it is not linear. And it's not always easy. And there's a lot of times clashing. And, you know, um, cognitive dissonance going on.

And I'm sure people listening, there's a lot of questions around. But what about health? But what about, you know, these conditions that change when body sizes change? And I could, again, go on for days about this. Um, but there's super good resources that I was telling you before that we were recording, Candice, about Food Psych, the podcast hosted by Christy Harrison.

She now does one called The Wellness Trap, I think. Or that's the name of her book at least. But she does just an amazing job of really going deep on all of these questions around weight and health and medicine. So I, anybody curious about this, I strongly [01:04:00] recommend going to look for Food Psych, P S Y C H. And just scrolling through, there's hundreds of episodes. Scrolling through and seeing which one, if it's diabetes or PCOS or any of these things that you have questions around.

And then Aubrey Gordon's podcast Maintenance Phase does a good one on Ozempic.

**Candice Schutter:** I listened to that one.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah, we're going to link to all of these resources. Like it's going to be a long list. But they're all so important.

Thank you.

**Tara Wike:** Um, I'll share with you some of my favorite instagram you know, streams of people who are showing their bold, beautiful bodies. Really changed my input. And I really don't have that same very, like we said, narrow view of what's beautiful.

It also helps change that lens when you have that moment, like you had Candice or in class with somebody praising the woman with the flu. You really start to see bodies differently. And it's, and actually some of the bodies that would have been celebrated and it would have been on, you know, Victoria's [01:05:00] Secret angels or whatever, you look at and you think, wow, what did it take to get there? And is that really, does that even look beautiful? I don't see the beauty in it sometimes, you know.

There are bodies of all kinds of, you know. I know there are naturally thin people too. But there are also a lot of unnaturally thin people. And, and you can kind of start to see it. And, or at least take away the importance of it for yourself. So, you know, you, you.

I don't envy it when I see it anymore.

**Candice Schutter:** Right?

**Tara Wike:** Which is huge. Right?

**Candice Schutter:** Well that's that concept of body body neutrality, right? Like this, feeling neutral around bodies, the way that they function, what they can do, their appearance. Like, it, I think it was sort of a counter culture movement to co opting of body positivity. And like this sense of, um, we need to love our bodies.

You should love your body. Love your, find the beauty in it. And there's, there's importance to that. And also there becomes this thing of like, why are we so fixated on beauty?

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, why should that actually matter? It's a body. You know, it's.

It's, I think, the body neutrality thing is [01:06:00] good, too. Because it's a little more accessible to folks. It's, it can be a, like a big demand to say, go and love your body after you've hated it for decades, you know? Um, but if you can take a kind of a side path. Where instead of the default thought being I'm hideous and, you know, disgusting. To being, I have a human body. Just the end.

Or this is the adipose tissue that's helping my perimenopause. Or this, you know, this is the extra fold I have from when I carried my son. You know, just things like that. Or these are the legs that hold me up all day long and let me dance. These are legs that ran the road races with my dad for years, know, this.

Just trying a different narrative in there. And it doesn't have to be these are the world's sexiest legs that ever were.

**Candice Schutter:** Exactly.

Well, yeah, that becomes that, that objectification, that like sexualizing of some. Like, well, you know, it's, it's my body's doesn't fit the ideal, but I need to make [01:07:00] sure that it's sexy anyway. And it's like, well, but does it have to be sexy? Like can it just be a body? Right.

It's, it's like, again, all the creative ways that the indoctrination like, guises itself in this. And now it's going to guise itself in that. It's

**Tara Wike:** Yeah Don't forget it's about what you look like, not how you feel.

**Candice Schutter:** Yes, exactly. Well said.

Ah, so good. Tara, we could have a whole series just talking to you about this. There's so much...

**Tara Wike:** Let's see what the response is. Hey, listen, if everybody's like, Oh my god, enough, ladies, we get it, diet culture, okay.

**Candice Schutter:** Which, Which they might.

**Tara Wike:** Which they might be. And I would understand.

Or, if everybody's like, yes, oh my god, I needed to hear this, I have a million questions. I'd be so happy to come back on.

**Candice Schutter:** Awesome.

**Tara Wike:** I love this topic. I think it's really important. I think this is a good audience for it. Because you kind of get how systems work and how [01:08:00] biases work. And now just exposing you to this one will hopefully have some healing effects.

**Candice Schutter:** Yes. I love that. So those of you who are listening out there, if you have thoughts, stories, questions around this, please share them with us. I know not everybody's, you know, comfy showing up with stuff in the comment feed, which I get. So feel free to send a direct message.

Let us know if there's something more you want us to explore around this. If you want to come on and explore with us. Particularly if you're in a body that is underrepresented in wellness culture and you want to come on and have a conversation. If you, if you feel safe with us.

**Tracy Stamper:** Yeah.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, because let's be clear, we are three able bodied, thin privileged, white women in this room right now. Um, telling you, boo hoo, how hard it's been for us.

Uh, and, which it has. You know, let's not undermine it. But at the same time, there's a lot tougher roads that have been traveled out there, so.

**Candice Schutter:** Absolutely. Yeah.

[01:09:00] So we want to hear from any of you. We really do. Like, it's, it's not to prioritize. But it is about, especially in this wellness culture, centering other perspectives would be really, a really beautiful thing.

So anything you have to bring to this, any questions you have, anything you want us to explore, please let us know.

And I would love to have you back again, Tara. To talk about this or anything else under the sun.

**Tara Wike:** It's such good stuff.

**Candice Schutter:** Yeah, and to say to that little voice in you that I've heard pop in a couple of times, because I share it. Where you're like, I know I'm talking a lot. I'm saying a lot. I'm doing you know, I'm saying.

Like I have that same voice. And I just want you to know that I have not once felt a sense of overwhelm around what you're bringing. It feels so rich. And it feels like a passion that's needed and a fire that I love sitting alongside. So keep doing you and bring that. Um.

I think that one of the things that is missing in these conversations is that passion, that energy, and that [01:10:00] activism. We don't see a lot of that in wellness spaces, especially. Because everyone's taught to be so stoic and pulled together and obedient.

**Tara Wike:** Emotional. I'm not just emotionally eating. I'm emotionally talking and conversing.

**Candice Schutter:** Yes! Emotionally talking. That's it. I love it.

So that hunger, that's the word I'm looking for. The hunger that's been demonized, our passions, our hungers, our voracious appetites for conversations, for understanding. Like, I just want this to be a space where we can bring that. That's something I'm struggling to make peace within myself at times. And I feel myself bridling and pulling back the reins.

So when you've said those things, Tara, I've been like, oh my gosh. I love this about you, maybe it's lovable about me, too. So thank you for that. You've given me all gifts.

**Tara Wike:** Yeah, no, thank you. I appreciate, I appreciate you saying that.

It is something I've been, I'm conscious of. You know, I'm, I was socialized in this world as a woman. Being told you have, you know, your place. And don't, you know, [01:11:00] stir the pot. And whatnot.

So it's good to hear that I don't need to apologize for taking up space. you.

**Candice Schutter:** No. Yeah.

Nor do any of you. So if you want to be visible in these conversations, there's room for you. And your appetites and curiosities are really, really important to us. And we want this space to be collaborative and co created conversation.

So thank you, Tara, so much for.

**Tara Wike:** Thank you so much for inviting me and having me.

**Candice Schutter:** I'd like to thank Tara for taking the time to share about her personal experiences and social activism. And also Tracy Stamper, as always, for her steadfast commitment to this work.

This conversation is just the beginning, as so many of us in wellness cult recovery are looking to deconstruct [01:12:00] internal barriers to self acceptance *and* actively encourage and support greater body diversity in fitness and healing spaces. So we're going to be circling back to this topic in later episodes with a more diverse lineup of guests.

Speaking of, a quick side note. I've decided that the best way for me to carry on doing this series is to steer clear of promises when it comes to timelines. So from here on out, I'll be dropping episodes organically, as they're ready. Sometimes it will be weekly; other times it will be longer.

So I'll be back with another guest I'm not exactly sure when, but certainly later this month. And until then, bonus conversations will continue to drop over on Patreon. There are currently 50+ bonus conversations available thanks to the monthly donations that make this work possible. You can learn more at [patreon.com/thedeeperpulse](https://patreon.com/thedeeperpulse).

Thanks so much for tuning in. And I'll see you next time.

[01:13:00]