

Full Plate Podcast Transcript - Episode #112: When Religion and Diet Culture Collide with Leslie Schilling, RD

00:01.16

Abbie

Leslie I'm so happy you're here. Yeah oh I've been really looking forward to this I really have and I loved your book and I can't wait to get into all the different themes and conversations you have in it. But you know I have to start with what's.

00:05.48

Leslie Schilling

I'm so excited to be here. Thank you for having me.

00:18.86

Abbie

On your plate and food first and then Lifewise what's taking up your plate.

00:21.97

Leslie Schilling

Who yeah, you got it So Breakfast Fried rice is on my plates several times a week usually and it was this morning. Um, it's just my favorite I'm such a breakfast person and. I'm more of a savory person particularly in the morning. So like I have breakfast breakfast fried rice and it's usually from like a leftover batch of rice that I've made for something else. Um a couple days a week and it's like it's going to be a good day So That's what's on my plate.

00:55.27

Abbie

It's so good. It's so good. So will you indulge me in like what? what do? What's your kind of go to how do you? How do you? ah hack it together.

01:04.00

Leslie Schilling

So what's um, really funny is my husband thinks he's better at making it than I am so I just I Just let him so okay, will you make it So I'm like.

01:08.70

Abbie

Um, he's wrong though. Probably yeah.

01:18.20

Leslie Schilling

Okay, go for it. So we do a couple cups of white rice in a bag of frozen mixed veggies. Just I steam them in the microwave and just kind of get them softened up. Um, and then we use sesame oil to kind of bring that all together.

01:27.13

Abbie

Um, yeah.

01:31.83

Abbie

Me too. Yes, yes.

01:37.54

Leslie Schilling

And then once you get that warm then you make like we this is a system according to my husband. Um, so you make it like a pond right? and then you add butter and then you do the eggs and you get them in there and then you mix it all up. You add the most delicious.

01:45.74

Abbie

Of course. Ah yep.

01:55.84

Leslie Schilling

Soy sauce. Whatever you love and then I like to hit it with also everything but the bagel um seasoning on top. Yeah, and then I have a big bowl of it and it's a good day. So.

01:59.50

Abbie

Oh yeah, it's always a good day. So It's so this is so I'm actually more of a sweet breakfast person but you're I make this fried rice like basically exactly we just described like most nights. It's like some like it's a really easy dinner or lunch or whatever. But um, it's one of my favorite meals and you know what when I'm sick One of my favorite things is just I strip out all the veggies and like I just do white rice with butter and scrambled eggs and salt when I'm Sick. It's just it.

02:22.73

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

02:38.25

Abbie

It's just so soul nourishing you know.

02:42.22

Leslie Schilling

It's so good and you know I grew up to like breakfast rice. Um I grew up in North Carolina and I would go have breakfast with my dad on the way to school a lot of mornings and they made this breakfast rice which was white rice and I think with milk butter and sugar.

02:46.46

Abbie

Um, um.

02:56.24

Abbie

Yes, like a rice pudding kind of or yeah.

02:59.30

Leslie Schilling

And it was just this sweet yes and it was so yummy and like it's. It's funny that it was like that takes me back to growing up and like I had a breakfast rice growing up too that was more sweet. So um, yeah, yeah I Love rice rice This is a good vehicle for.

03:08.10

Abbie

Yes, yes I look it really.

03:18.52

Leslie Schilling

Anything. It's so yummy.

03:19.60

Abbie

Is I lived in New Orleans for a little bit and I remember having I loved a good like rice pudding with like cinnamon and like you said like butter and sugar and um, actually one of my best memories of you know something that I took with me and still throw in in fried rice to this day is I remember going to this. Um.

03:26.89

Leslie Schilling

Ah, yeah.

03:39.18

Abbie

It was like a diner in New Orleans and they would put french fries in their omelets and so I always if I have fries I love adding them to a fried rice with the eggs and like you know it's just it's so good. Um, so.

03:50.50

Leslie Schilling

I Love it I Love that to all the texture combos I Know that's not for everybody but I love it.

03:57.27

Abbie

I Know me too. But I'll throw it all in. Okay, all right, I could go on this question forever. What's on your plate lifewise.

04:09.49

Leslie Schilling

Ah, life. Um, life is life in. You know, there's a lot. Um life is life in um I have an eleven year old who is just so fun and she's my little health propaganda spotter.

04:10.66

Abbie

Life is lifey. Okay.

04:24.69

Leslie Schilling

So You know we're always talking about diet culture in the safe places and so really, what's on my plate um kind of life professionally is really helping people see diet culture in the safe places and like these are conversations I have every day like my sister just called me. Um. You know before a meeting just ah earlier this morning. She was like my daughter had to watch a documentary for her health class and then do this thing after it and it really made her think that something was wrong with her food in her body and so I'm like. Diet culture is in the safe places So Schools, churches, medical offices and and sometimes homes you know we mean well and sometimes it still shows up and so really, what's on my professional and personal because it's hard to escape. Um, it is like helping people see diet culture in places that should be really safe.

05:16.51

Abbie

Yeah I Love how you frame it that way because it's so true and that's what makes it even more insidious is it's much easier to take in and internalize when you're making and coming from this place of assuming that these. Safe spaces particularly with people in positions of power whether it's a teacher or yet ah a priest or you know you name it a doctor. It's so much easier to fall into that self labeling kind of I'm the problem.

05:41.54

Leslie Schilling

Wow.

05:54.24

Abbie

I Do need to kind of be obedient if you know the messaging that I'm getting and it's so much easier to fall into that's right.

06:01.40

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, yeah, because there's this assumed level of safety in these places um or assumed truth which um can be really dangerous.

06:11.21

Abbie

With him. I want to go down kind of that rabbit hole of course for the bulk of the conversation he brought up your daughter and something I wanted to ask you. That's been on my mind a lot lately and just in conversation with the folks that I work with is having to repair as a parent if. There was some harm in the home in terms of diet culture never intended usually but we all were all indoctrinated in this and so as a parent often when we start to see the harm of diet culture. We might recognize Oh my gosh I.

06:40.64

Leslie Schilling

Right.

06:54.77

Abbie

Did I mess my kid up? Is what I hear all the time, and of course it's possible but to repair and I always tell people that but I'm curious: Did you have that experience? Did you have any repairing you had to do or by the time you were raising your daughter were you kind of well on your way into this weight inclusive Anti-d Diet approach?

07:15.90

Leslie Schilling

You know I do a lot of repairing like repair is everything right? like repair is so meaningful and so necessary in all relationships and particularly parent child I will say I am incredibly.

07:28.41

Abbie

Asks.

07:35.70

Leslie Schilling

Privileged and lucky to have been very anti diet before my daughter came along. It doesn't mean I was free of diet culture, and here's an example of repair. We just did this yesterday. So I have a newsletter that goes out every Friday and one of my.

07:39.14

Abbie

Um.

07:52.84

Leslie Schilling

Readers who is a client from a long time ago said hey I just noticed that you said something about quality air quotes ingredients in your newsletter now I started writing these menus like a decade ago.

08:02.17

Abbie

And and.

08:09.47

Leslie Schilling

And I revise them every week and and update them to use salad kits and like convenience foods and make things a lot easier for people to get food in front of them if they're cooking at home or they're assembling at home and I try to remove those things if I see them because when I wrote them. I didn't think those words were harmful and so I'm writing this newsletter that will go out this week and and I put now time for menus and an apology and so I'm writing that like I owe you an apology because this word was in the menu.

08:29.20

Abbie

Here.

08:37.66

Abbie

Mean.

08:47.95

Leslie Schilling

And while it might seem very benign it dichotomizes food in a way that I don't want to do that and I've learned that that's harmful and like please forgive me. We're all learning and unlearning together and my daughter's like you know what? mom.

09:05.29

Abbie

Now. Yeah.

09:05.85

Leslie Schilling

I think it's really important. You said you were sorry and I'm like but it is important buddy that we you know and I feel like somebody asked me to give a talk for dieticians and later on in the year and and they were like it's you only have a you only have like 8 minutes or 10 minutes to do your kind of like what you've learned.

09:24.95

Abbie

Um.

09:25.85

Leslie Schilling

And that came on the Hills of me riding this like hey I need to own that something was in there that that was could have landed very harmfully for people and um.

09:38.26

Leslie Schilling

I was like oh I know what I want to talk on. It's like if you are going to be a professional in this space. You have to be willing to eat your own words and say that gosh I must stop even though I live here and I work here and I'm still unlearning and learning like we have to be able to do repair and so.

09:43.81

Abbie

Um, yes.

09:58.00

Leslie Schilling

I get served tumble pie a lot. So Um, and you know and I try to I try to um, you know, talk to her about it. There are times where maybe I've um. And dichotomized foods in a way that I didn't mean to or it landed in a way I it I didn't mean for it to where we've had to talk about hey buddy I said this and if it came across as I'm trying to control.

10:14.61

Abbie

Um, with more.

10:26.10

Leslie Schilling

How you're putting food in your tummy then that is not what I'm at and I'm and I'm sorry you are in charge of you and so yeah I've had to I've had to eat words because things didn't land the way they. I wanted them to or they I didn't realize it was a diet culture term at the moment and a really good example of that is my first book. Um, born to eat which is now in its second edition and when I when that book came out I was writing these these. Menus that I was talking about too. Um, and I had a lot of language that I didn't think fell under diet culture. Um umbrella that looking back now I'm like wow I am so grateful. For second additions and the second edition is the repair of born to e where we were able to pull out things that landed not the way we wanted to pull out things that might have been just diet culture and we didn't realize it yet. So. I think repair is just part of our day-to-day lives.

11:30.74

Abbie

And I think as a human if you want to be evolving and growing which especially I know the community that listens to this podcast does it. It's unavoidable I mean we have to engage in repair and repair with ourselves and so much of this work.

11:43.30

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

11:49.28

Abbie

Is repair with ourselves right? It is repairing and returning to like a ah way of being with ourselves that is self-compassionate and understanding like we were complicit in in so much of this because it's the classic you know idea of like you. You can only.

11:52.45

Leslie Schilling

Um, now 100%

12:01.86

Leslie Schilling

Yeah.

12:08.88

Abbie

You can only do so much with what you know at the time and and as long as we can look and say look I was doing my best with the information I had now I know more I'm going to repair whether it be with my child whether you're a doctor and you need to have talks with your patients because you realize like some of the weight stigma.

12:14.20

Leslie Schilling

Um.

12:28.74

Abbie

And weight bias that you've been carrying whether you're a practitioner a therapist. It's everybody all of us. So I appreciate that I yeah I think it's just such an important conversation forgiveness for ourselves for others and yeah.

12:29.32

Leslie Schilling

Yeah.

12:39.57

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, and and not new I think a lot of people in kind of the the health realm too like we get defensive like we protect.

12:48.20

Abbie

I was just going to say defensive. Yes, yes.

12:52.47

Leslie Schilling

Protecting right? We're so we're we're protecting that like we know this or we have this credential. But I think that something that's even more powerful is the willingness to say gosh I messed up and and I.

13:01.49

Abbie

Absolutely I messed up.

13:11.63

Leslie Schilling

You know I try to own that as much as I can because listen I peddled diet culture like I peddled diet culture early in my career and um, so yeah, like we when we know better. We we do better and when we know better We do better it.

13:15.62

Abbie

Mattna.

13:28.16

Abbie

Her.

13:28.76

Leslie Schilling

Really lights a fire under us to keep doing better and keep looking for the blind spots.

13:33.45

Abbie

Yeah I I could not I mean everything you just said resonated so much I mean I actually I find repair to be 1 of the most powerful powerful experiences I've ever had especially like I I even give this example when I'm working with parents who are afraid that they've. You know, caused irreparable damage with their kids due to diet culture and dieting and disordered eating in their home and I'll say you know I my parents are in their seventy s and if they were to come to me and repair something even that happened like thirty years ago

13:57.93

Leslie Schilling

Um, what.

14:10.93

Abbie

I would be shook and impressed and right like it would be very powerful and and it's never too late I Just think it's never too late and it's it. It doesn't lose its power. So yeah, mm.

14:15.23

Leslie Schilling

Um, same yeah, never never yeah am I My mom has read both but you know both books and and she's like.

14:29.34

Abbie

Yeah, yeah, yeah, exactly.

14:31.97

Leslie Schilling

Ah, just wish I would have known like I would have done things so differently and I'm like you did what you knew what was barrass you know and like when we know better We try to do better and and I will say for for your listeners that are like.

14:46.50

Abbie

Who.

14:47.48

Leslie Schilling

Feel like I did the good food bad food I feel like I've done all these things to my kids I feel like I've dichotomized or or talked about bodies or whatever. Um, there aren't many people in in this culture who haven't done that right and there is nothing more powerful than a parent saying gosh.

14:59.00

Abbie

Right.

15:05.93

Abbie

Oh my God Yeah, the most.

15:07.52

Leslie Schilling

I was wrong. Please forgive me this is what I know now and let me tell you who did a beautiful um who did a beautiful post about this recently Jenny Jones um love more on. Ah yeah, lovemore dot work. Um, she did a beautiful script.

15:18.98

Abbie

Ah, and.

15:23.58

Abbie

Um, O Okay I'll find Yeah maybe I'll find it and we can share it in the notes because that's I love that and I think just this topic in general actually I didn't mean to go in this direction but you you.

15:24.38

Leslie Schilling

Post like here's what you can say when you are afraid it was It was fantastic. Yeah.

15:38.67

Leslie Schilling

Ah, that's okay, well.

15:39.57

Abbie

You mentioned your daughter and I I just it was just on my heart and it felt like really, it felt really resonant with the whole conversation. We're having today because I do think like everything that you everything you talk about in your book is is wrapped up in this idea really you know like how do we.

15:46.94

Leslie Schilling

You know.

15:58.97

Abbie

How do we navigate systems and structures and institutions that have caused harm. Um, if we want to stay within them particularly you speak to that when it comes to the church and places and spaces of worship. Um, you also speak a lot in the book about you know you you already mentioned like safe spaces and you mentioned schools, medical offices and the church and I want to focus mainly on the church day because I think we've had a lot of conversations about the other two. Um, and I'm so deeply appreciative of you and your lens on this particularly because it's something you know I don't have a lot of lived experience with and in terms of religion and that being part of my upbringing. So um, for the listeners. Um. Leslie wrote a book. It's called Feed Yourself and it's a wonderful incredible book and I highly recommend it. But Leslie, what can you kind of set the stage and explain like why did you write the book in the first place like what made you start to realize and recognize specifically when we're talking about faith and religion like. This was a void that needed to be filled.

17:14.82

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, you know I think as I was becoming a weight neutral practitioner you know, understanding the harms of diet culture and seeing it for myself. Um, my goal was you know.

17:24.93

Abbie

Um.

17:28.28

Leslie Schilling

My goal for people who read the book whether they're religious or not. It's really I tried to keep it a light touch for people who just don't want that too. But I mean I'm not trying to like be in somebody's space when I know that that has actually harmed a lot of people and so um.

17:33.41

Abbie

I Can attest to that as someone who's not super. Yeah, yeah, yeah, yeah, yes, yes.

17:47.58

Leslie Schilling

Tried to keep that a light touch and um.

17:53.94

Leslie Schilling

Okay, so the main reason is one to help people see diet culture and I just sat there thinking about like my daughter's generation like the book is dedicated to her and her generation So that diet culture won't be their legacy.

18:05.88

Abbie

Um.

18:09.19

Abbie

M.

18:12.42

Leslie Schilling

And so as I'm sitting there in in a church. Um well I'm thinking about all this I'm seeing all these messages and hearing all these people talk about or or coming up to me like knowing what I do, um you know like are you really going to eat that do you need to cupcakes. Um, you know. We're we're going to do this bible study it it might help us lose weight or these foods are good or these foods are bad or did you see that person larger body could they be gluttonous like I'm going right for it. So all of these things broke my heart. Knowing what I know as an eating disorder provider and then you put that with like being a christian eating disorder provider and seeing the harm and the shame in the the bible versus out of context. Wrapping up a diet I was heartbroken and listen it took me this book has been on my heart for a decade and it probably took me a year or two like I had an agent for born to eat but it took me a year or 2.

19:11.23

Abbie
M.

19:22.75

Leslie Schilling

To get a different agent for this book because my previous agent wonderful. But he's like Leslie ah, this is not my not my genre. He's like not my genre girl. Um, and so um, he sent me to someone else who when I landed with her.

19:30.50

Abbie

Um, yeah.

19:41.82

Leslie Schilling

She was like the next day she's like this is my life I am all the way here for this and so it and nobody was talking about it like you know people are talking in the church about love your body and you're worthy and.

19:46.16

Abbie

So yeah.

20:01.23

Leslie Schilling

Grace covers everything and those things are true but nobody was ever talking about why we can't believe any of that and it's because diet culture. Yeah, it's because diet culture is in the safe places and it's sanctioned.

20:09.46

Abbie

Um, about ourselves. Especially um.

20:19.12

Leslie Schilling

In some of the safe places. So my just like there's I'm a big internal family systems person. So like I'm super I'm super ifs right? And so my advocate it has been on fire for years.

20:25.79

Abbie

So me too me too. So and yes, um, yeah.

20:36.80

Leslie Schilling

Um, and my protector of other people and my so I wouldn't let it put I just couldn't put it down and I found this wonderful, Wonderful agent. Um, who was all the way there for it and.

My publisher was all the way there for it. They let me say the really hard things they they pushed. They let me push the limits and send it through legal to make sure I could say the things I wanted to say so um, ah you know.

21:07.40

Leslie Schilling

It needed it needed to be said I felt nobody was saying like saying the hard stuff that needed to be said in the church but I think a lot of that is because I grew up in the very evangelical south and you don't question Authority and you don't say.

21:09.57

Abbie

Yeah.

21:20.42

Abbie

Right? That's that's it. It's positions of power and authority. Yeah.

21:26.28

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, yeah, and and as I'm doing all of this I'm doing tons of reading about abuse of power in the church in the church is actually showing us this a lot of this and I'm just like field with.

21:37.67

Abbie

Ah.

21:45.25

Leslie Schilling

This overwhelming um like voice or or truth or whatever it was to be like I can't stop until this is in the world I can't let people be hurt in the safe places when I can see that I can see this. Like you can tell this like makes me tear up I'm so like um, but it's it was just this advocate piece of me that just couldn't let it go.

22:09.42

Abbie

So it it sounds like it was like it's like this deep ache in you for a long time and and I can really yes and you're right I can see it as you're talking about it. No, it's like I and so I get that way too. Lastly I mean I know it's like.

22:16.57

Leslie Schilling

Um, that yeah.

22:22.50

Leslie Schilling

Um, it it broke my heart it broke my heart and to see.

22:28.46

Abbie

It's painful. Um I I would love like because you mentioned kind of offhand just a couple of the things that you you know, just as examples of things you've heard in in church. How more specifically say I mean I would imagine if someone's.

22:30.63

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

22:40.50

Leslie Schilling

Yes.

22:47.28

Abbie

Listening and if they're let's say they're like oh gosh How does this all connect though. So how would how would you describe how diet culture intersects with religious teaching particularly in the context of the church.

23:01.26

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, um I think that so I hired Theologians for the book because I didn't want anybody to come at me like saying.

23:13.48

Abbie

Smart Smart Ah I'm a dietician.

23:15.23

Leslie Schilling

You're not a scholar I'm like no I'm not a biblical scholar. You are correct but these few people these 2 people are um so I the thing that is the the probably the most prominent example would be taking bible verses out of context. To support participation in diet culture and examples would be the body is the temple. So um, ah so and what's interesting.

23:35.48

Abbie

And.

23:43.72

Abbie

Um, yes, great example which permeates culture outside of I mean I see it as I've worked in like sports die tedx for a long time. You'll hear that from athletes a lot right? like body is a temple.

23:52.62

Leslie Schilling

Um, it's yeah oh yeah, yeah, the body as a temple and I'm like you're right and it is because the holy spirit lives there not because of anything you do for it So you know so I really dug into the verses that. That's really I think Diet Culture's favorite Verse Um, or your body is not your own and you know there are so many verses that are taken out of context and that's because translations of the bible over time have been translated.

24:14.66

Abbie

Um.

24:28.94

Leslie Schilling

By people impacted by diet culture therefore the language has shifted and so there someone asked me about um the Daniel plan or um, Daniel's fast or whatever and I'm like if you really read about Daniel's fast in the. Earlier versions or earlier translations of the bible Daniel didn't go to whole foods and get all this like special ingredients and all the things Daniel in in the book I put Jesus walks into whole foods just kidding, but my editor took that out. Ah, but but what you know like if you look at the earlier translations of that when Daniel came out of it wasn't even called a fast he abstained from certain foods to prove a point. Um, it says he ended up fatter and the term in the. Later translation says healthy for the same the same word. So fat are using used as a positive attribute of of him at that time and then you see it kind of transition.

25:27.80

Abbie

I'm gonna.

25:43.14

Leslie Schilling

To he did these things therefore he was healthier so we hate yeah healthism shows up and that and that's calls one of the wonderful theologians that I work with um Dr Aaron Bowers

25:44.65

Abbie

I was going to say healthism shows up there. Yeah.

25:56.96

Leslie Schilling

She was like what I think what happens here is that the people who are doing the translations or the people who are reading these verses and then coming to their own

conclusions about it have not checked their own diet culture bias at the door before they sit down to write a sermon. Or Whatever. So if you hear a sermon and it's like your body is the temple you better eat more vegetables you better eat organic raspberries or what or yeah lose weight or whatever. Um, that is fully out of context and the really funny thing I think about this verse.

26:23.63

Abbie

Um, lose weight. Yeah, um.

26:34.52

Leslie Schilling

It's not about food at all at all period. Nothing about it's about like a bunch of orgies and corranants. So It's It's not about food at all. Um, which is I think interesting How we've taken it Out. It's really just about hey the spirit and the divine live within you. And we take it out of context and we also may turn that into judging people. Um like judging people in larger bodies and we say I've had pastors and people in the church say that person must have a problem with gluttony.

27:08.80

Abbie

Running.

27:11.67

Leslie Schilling

Because they live in a larger body listen that happens more than I would like to admit I've heard that happens so much people send me all kind of messages about like hey watch this vermin or it is It is really um.

27:18.51

Abbie

Right.

27:28.35

Leslie Schilling

Disturbing how much weight bias in Stigma is weaved into this safe place that is the church and body diversity has always been with us always been with us and we. We judge in the places that should be the safest when Judgment is really not ours to give.

27:49.51

Abbie

Yeah, and I think what's so important about what you just described in explaining kind of that things taken out of context and or Bias not checked at the door when is Bias ever checked at the door right? like I say.

28:05.64

Leslie Schilling
Um, yeah.

28:08.39

Abbie

We We we don't know we have it. Um I think that's what's so important for people to hear from you is like the same thing we talk about when we talk about doctor's office right? or a teacher. It's like people are people people have these are people who have grown up immersed in conditioned by.

28:19.48

Leslie Schilling
Um, right.

28:26.58

Abbie

All of these systems of oppression including you know you mentioned the term gluttonous gluttony I mean I've had Jessica Wilson on before talking about the racist like roots of diet culture and that word is very wrapped up in kind of what upholds.

28:27.48

Leslie Schilling
Yep.

28:31.17

Leslie Schilling
Yeah.

28:39.39

Leslie Schilling
Um, yeah.

28:42.73

Leslie Schilling
Right.

28:43.77

Abbie

Like whitewashed version of diet culture that we have today too like and what you're saying and what everyone needs to hear is like these are human beings who have their own disordered eating patterns.

28:53.43

Leslie Schilling
Um, yeah.

29:00.73

Abbie

Their own diet culture beliefs just because they're in the positions that they're in doesn't mean that Bias doesn't exist in them and that they know more about your body than you do or about these systems than you do.

29:10.26

Leslie Schilling

Right? right? Yeah yeah, but because it's delivered from this place of righteous authority. Those arrows are really.

29:23.40

Abbie

Um, yeah, yeah.

29:28.88

Leslie Schilling

Really deep wounds and and that's when I was like listen I've been pulling the weeds of diet culture for 20 years plus in my practice but let me tell you how hard it is to pull 1 that got planted in the safest of the places. Um, it's really hard.

29:35.10

Abbie

Um, motion.

29:43.83

Abbie

Nan.

29:47.44

Leslie Schilling

It's really really hard. it's it's doable but I think it's doable when you're like oh my gosh I can see it now I can see my pastor's bias I can see that my pastor negatively judges. Um, their own bodies in on stage in front of everybody I write about that in the book that was probably the the straw that broke the Camel's back for the book is when that that happened and I write about I think that's it's in the early chapters. It's diet culture isn't in the safe places or isn't in the church and that is where.

30:09.31

Abbie

Right.

30:21.33

Leslie Schilling

A pastor that I'd love just degraded himself so much from the pulpit and said something to the effect that he wouldn't be air quote overweight in heaven and I my heart broke I'm like we we gotta talk about this.

30:22.21

Abbie

And.

30:38.30

Abbie

Um, yeah, that shame and guilt and blame is so painful and then to you know like you know the saying like hurt people hurt people.

30:40.94

Leslie Schilling

Because this is my favorite guy I Love him so much and this just came out of his mouth And yeah, yeah.

30:54.74

Abbie

You know and that to like hear and feel that hurt that he feels about his own body and then the fact that he's standing up there speaking it to an audience that sees him as yeah, an authority on these on these matters and that they should feel the same and you say there's a.

30:55.41

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

31:00.67

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

31:08.83

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah, yeah.

31:14.44

Abbie

There's a quote that I love that you I will first of all I love that you used quotes all the time. Um I'm a big quote person but I wrote this one down because I loved it. It's one. It's from Dr. Hilary McBride me too. Um, and it's it says spiritual trauma is someone handing you an inner critic and telling you.

31:16.82

Leslie Schilling

And.

31:23.99

Leslie Schilling

Yes, love Hillary McBride yes

31:34.32

Abbie

It's the voice of God and that just I mean again I said I'm not like I told you I'm not someone who you know was raised in a faith-based home or anything but I can that captures so much for me.

31:34.68

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

31:47.63

Abbie

And you went on to talk a lot about this and I was hoping maybe could you dig into this quote a little bit in your interpretation of it and why you know what it means I mean how this has all been like spiritual trauma in and of itself this diet culture kind of being perpetuated in the church.

31:48.76

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

32:00.38

Leslie Schilling

You know I mean think about how we say like the repeated being waited at the doctor's office or saying no or not getting care or the or. Experiencing stigma out in public. So this repeated trauma of um for many people living in larger bodies and and then imagine that in the place where you're also told that you are an. Image bearer and but something is wrong with you. The message is so incongruent of Grace for the first I mean you know first off, but when somebody.

32:41.40

Abbie

Um.

32:52.30

Leslie Schilling

Builds this inner critic into you and says it's god and you've got this voice in you and I think of a client who I love so much who's been harmed so much particularly in religion. I think of her when I think of that I think of many of my clients. But I really think of her when I live when I think about that quote from um Dr. McBride and it's like helping her parse apart herself. And and her choices around food and her body. Um, it's it's like pulling a weed with thorns. So like

what's happening in diet culture is awful. But when you teach a 4 5 6 year old. To not want to eat a cookie but because something's wrong with them and they're impure and not perfect and god will not love them or they'll burn in hell for wanting to eat a treat that is that that is the vision of her quote.

33:58.47

Abbie

Yes.

34:02.56

Leslie Schilling

For me because I've said across from those people my whole career and I I can look at this client be like I wrote this for you to free you because she's she never. That was never her voice that was never God's voice.

34:22.66

Abbie

Leslie this this resonates with me on every level like because I can hear this in I can hear this in the pain and trauma of just a parent telling a child that a doctor telling and we we. Behold like it stays with us every client and I'm sure I I am sure you have had the same experience I just know every client I've ever worked with it started with something that someone said to them who they looked up to or felt was.

34:40.91

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

34:54.15

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

35:00.30

Abbie

You know, an ah authority like you've discussed and you've discussed like so whether it happens in the church or within your family within your home when you go to see a doctor a coach on your sports team a teacher like you were saying your daughter luckily knows how to navigate this and call it out when you see it.

35:00.99

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

35:12.56

Leslie Schilling

Um, you know.

35:18.69

Abbie

But it stays with us and it is It is deeply deeply transformative in how we grow up evolve and see ourself and have a sense of self-worth in who we are Like. We're the person that can't control ourselves around Food. We're the person whose body is Wrong. We have to control this body control our behaviors in order to be moral to be virtuous to be lovable to belong to be accepted. I mean it's the deepest kind of wound.

35:40.90

Leslie Schilling

Um I um.

35:46.79

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah, yeah, when you tie it to your righteousness. Um, yeah.

35:48.32

Abbie

You can ever experience right? right? Yeah, and yeah, exactly your safety right? I mean that's really what it comes down to right.

35:59.33

Leslie Schilling

When it's and it's a belonging right? like our I don't I don't get to belong until I meet their criteria of perfection which completely blows the whole mean of Grace like apart.

36:06.77

Abbie

Right? um.

36:15.78

Abbie

Oh.

36:19.16

Leslie Schilling

Because there's nothing you can do to separate yourself from that. Love that is already yours and so we have like really really um, messed that up for a lot of people when the message is pretty simple.

36:26.47

Abbie

Sessions.

36:37.40

Leslie Schilling

That like there's nothing. You can do that? No food you put on your plate. No size of pants that you buy, no nothing can take this love that was already yours away and then we teach kids that it's all conditional and transactional around.

36:51.80

Abbie

Yeah, yes, and you talk you talk really beautifully. You have a you you talk about divine design and my interpretation of that as someone again who's not faith based is like kind of the equivalent of like body diversity right? like this idea that it's bodies.

36:54.72

Leslie Schilling

Their food and body choices.

37:08.54

Leslie Schilling

Um, totally yeah.

37:09.64

Abbie

Are meant to be diverse. Ah they that is natural that is beautiful. It is intentional like we were created with that in mind and I give my my clients. Love the example I always give of my dogs because I have 2 dogs that look very different, very different sizes different breeds. We'd never.

37:17.55

Leslie Schilling

Um, now.

37:26.70

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah, um.

37:28.65

Abbie

Assume that those 2 dogs should look the same that we should try to mold their bodies and sculpt their bodies to look the same that would be ridiculous. It would be harmful. It would be starvation for one of them. You know like and and yet we we have so much rhetoric in all of these safe spaces to your point in the book.

37:38.52

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah, yeah.

37:44.83

Leslie Schilling

But.

37:48.65

Abbie

Telling us otherwise that if we differ in any way from this really narrow oppressive Beauty ideal then we are not right. We are wrong and we need to be fixed and your and you kind of your answer to this is like no we are designed this way.

37:51.21

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

38:00.91

Leslie Schilling

Um, right.

38:06.11

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, yeah, designed this way loved already and that's worthy like nothing like there are murderers in the bible nothing. You can do can separate you know so it's like.

38:07.90

Abbie

For a reason.

38:13.12

Abbie

Um, worthy.

38:17.90

Abbie

Love that.

38:25.15

Leslie Schilling

We have weaponized versus out of context to harm people and prop up diet culture and it only harms us.

38:38.14

Abbie

Um, and something you said a few minutes ago that it's is um, it's coming back to me now as you say that is like how do how? how do you suggest someone rebuild and regain. Self-trust in a system and a structure. That's really wrongly taken it away from them and dismantled that like how do you if somebody wants to continue to engage with their faith and has started to notice.

38:58.14

Leslie Schilling
Um, yeah, yeah.

39:13.90

Abbie

Harm that they've experienced the hands of their church or perhaps they're hearing it more often from folks in their communities but they want they want to stay they that it's an important part of their life. How do you balance and Nourish a compassionate like.

39:14.39

Leslie Schilling
Um, yeah.

39:32.25

Leslie Schilling
Yeah.

39:33.62

Abbie

Relationship with food in yourself while also acknowledging the presence of this. Um.

39:37.27

Leslie Schilling

You know? Yeah well I think like you said earlier like the church is made up of people and all of these people living today grow up in diet culture. So I think if we have this like it makes sense that. People feel the way they feel I also hold pastors Christian influencers and all of that at a much higher level of responsibility for what they're delivering. So if someone felt safe.

40:07.41

Abbie
Yeah.

40:14.64

Leslie Schilling

I would say something I would say I have noticed these things coming up in church and listen I Love this church I Love almost everything that we do here. There are a couple things that are really worrying me would you be open to a conversation.

40:28.80

Abbie
And.

40:31.78

Leslie Schilling

Would you be open to listening to a podcast. Um you can pass the but you know I made a Spotify list of every podcast I've ever been on that talks about this subject because I've got a lot of people there like I don't feel like I could talk about it. Um.

40:46.50

Abbie
Yeah.

40:50.56

Leslie Schilling

And I'm like well it's okay if they're open and here's the thing if they're not open. You have to decide whether this is something that you can sit in a pew and and deal with and let pass or not and I'm lucky to. Have been in places where I also have the privilege of being a professional in this space where people will will some not all the times but sometimes listen to what I have to say um and so that has been helpful so sharing resources.

41:16.58

Abbie
Zoom.

41:25.17

Abbie
On.

41:28.27

Leslie Schilling

Um, in this space um can be helpful like I wrote a whole bunch of stuff when the book was coming out specifically for pastors um to just kind of ah so open open our eyes about how diet culture gets in to our safe places. The other thing is like be. Willing to really have some grief around it. You know I think this is the same thing. Um that people feel like as your body changes through life very naturally very naturally bodies change none of us are frozen in time or in our prime and we are always Changing. Um.

41:47.95

Abbie
Um.

42:04.63

Leslie Schilling

And usually not shrinking and so there's grief involved with that because you didn't get what diet culture promised you you might not have gotten what that bible study promised you you could just pray a little harder over your diet I kid you not? There's one out there. Um, so there's grief involved with.

42:23.58

Abbie

That.

42:23.97

Leslie Schilling

Cosh I didn't get what I thought I was going to get and there's grief involved a great deal of it actually um, with being lied to in a safe place or not being protected in a safe place and I will and and there's so if you.

42:32.49

Abbie

Yes, yes, yes, yes.

42:42.72

Leslie Schilling

Feel like you can move past grief and move past. Um, untrust then that might be a safe place for you to there could be repair that there are honestly lovely lovely humans. That are open to repair I've talked to some amazing pastors that are like Leslie I cannot believe I have done this I did this was me I did that sermon you said was so harmful I did it I have to go back and undo it I'm like yes you do You're the perfect person to do that.

43:12.80

Abbie

And that.

43:19.90

Leslie Schilling

So there are people out there that are willing to hear um and then there are ah plenty that are not and they're unsafe and I feel very confident in saying that that's an unsafe place for you and you might want to consider.

43:37.35

Leslie Schilling

Looking for a community and it might not be a church building but looking for a community that understands how diet culture has um you know. Gotten into the safe places or you might find a church for example, the theologian that I worked with like she's a pastor of a church in North Carolina like if I was still living in North Carolina I would be at Dr Bower Church because I know that she's really going to keep she's going to keep those messages safe. And theologically sound by not letting diet culture into it. So it's hard There's so much tied up into it and if somebody feels safe enough and listen in a church you should feel safe to voice your opinion and if you don't I think that's a red flag. So um, so if you feel safe enough to voice. Voice it if they're open send resources if they're not. We really got to think about whether um, Jesus and his grace are there or not.

44:41.55

Abbie

Yeah, so well said I mean you you named kind of really 3 core things I was just kind of reflecting on what you're saying that are so integral to healing and reclaiming like self-trust and. Body autonomy and a peaceful relationship with but with your food and your body and that is like you know boundaries right? like you you named I mean that's a big part of what you named is like we have to decide like what is and what is not okay.

45:04.48

Leslie Schilling

Yeah.

45:12.50

Leslie Schilling

Right.

45:13.49

Abbie

And then to be able to feel safe enough to voice that and that's a good test to your point of like is this a space that I want to be in because whether it's the church whether it's your doctor whether it's your parent whether it's like you you should be able to feel safe. Providing feedback asking for support in a different way expressing like that you were harmed and if you don't that is a like that is a red flag about that space in and of itself like you said and then you also named two other which was grief which is so integral to this process and.

45:36.55

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

45:42.10

Leslie Schilling

Um, you know.

45:47.36

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah.

45:49.89

Abbie

Integral to a changing body and to former beliefs or former harm. You might have caused like grieving all of these experiences and then the third thing that I heard was like community which I was really glad that you named which is like you can find community elsewhere and that bolsters like your own. Kind of and justifies invalidates and affirms your own lived experience when you're still navigating spaces that aren't able to do that for you and so seeking that community and that support so I just thought those were beautiful reminders for everyone and we kind of came full circle to repair.

46:22.33

Leslie Schilling
Um, yeah.

46:27.14

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, yeah, well you you made me think of something else like in terms of like going through this process with 1 of my clients. Um I I write about her. Um.

46:34.46

Abbie

Um.

46:40.70

Leslie Schilling

But going through this process where she had been told her whole life. She was gluttonous and she's like this really successful person right? and she's like I've got everything under control of my life except gluttony and I can tell you for anybody who's listening who's ever thought that that was their.

46:42.61

Abbie

Yeah, it's awful god.

47:00.40

Leslie Schilling

Issue I have never not once in Twenty plus years of practice ever seen a glutton because gluttony is a heart posture. Not a what's on your plate issue and so what this person. Thought was gluttony was her very wise body telling her she had not eaten enough today therefore she had to eat more at night because she was diet culture air quotes good during the day which her hurt. Safe place taught her how to do that so as she was getting control of her air quotes gluttony she was learning to restrict a very wise body and so what perpetuate so I I told her like I'm like like I can't pardon anybody I can't do it I'm not a theologian.

47:43.82

Abbie

And perpetuating perpetuating the behavior. It's a cycle.

47:56.49

Leslie Schilling

But I can with all confidence say you are not a glutton. This is not a gluttony issue like this is a youre undered and your body is wise.

48:10.12

Abbie

It's your body saving your life. Yeah yes.

48:13.30

Leslie Schilling

Your body is helping you survive and you are your your body's amazing. This is amazing and I I don't know that I've ever seen in in the years of practice like where I've talked about this with people I don't know and listen I don't talk about.

48:17.49

Abbie

And.

48:31.75

Leslie Schilling

People I don't talk about any of this with people unless they open the door so'm like I'm not pushy I'm my given verses I'm not I'm like I am like if somebody opens the door to this then I want to be a safe place for them to land. Um, but she.

48:32.51

Abbie

Right? yeah.

48:38.85

Abbie

And here.

48:47.54

Leslie Schilling

This was the first probably the first client I've ever seen just have this moment of like a veil was lifted where she was like I I can't believe I've been lied to and it just clicked because I'm like.

48:55.10

Abbie

That's so p.

49:06.84

Leslie Schilling

And I love to say God doesn't make Jun so like you know your body's pretty smart and so that that really, um, just having a conversation about I'm and I'm always hand on heart like I'm so sorry that harm came to you and what should have been a safe place I'm so sorry. This message was given to you at such a young age I'm so sorry you have suffered through restriction and chronic dieting for the sake of God when God Never ask you to do that and I'm going to sit here with you. Until we figure it Out. We're gonna get you fed and it's okay, if you are upset because you've been lied to I'm upset too I'm upset for you I'm upset with you. Um, and there's grieffe and then there's freedom and I'm gonna sit with you until you feel it and. That was probably she taught me as much as I taught her just with her sharing her experience and how how deeply rooted rooted it really was for her.

50:11.39

Abbie

Thank you for sharing that I I relate to that so much just in personal experience and as a practitioner too I just to be able to have that space to voice the shame and then feel the release of like. This personal responsibility narrative that we have in our culture that permeates every type of institution like to release that I'm just thank you. Thank you for talking about this Leslie. Thank you for writing about it. Um, again as someone who doesn't have experience with it I think it's just.

50:31.30

Leslie Schilling

Um, yeah, yeah.

50:46.14

Leslie Schilling

Um, and of course.

50:49.25

Abbie

I Do I think it is such a needed connection like this intersection of diet culture and faith and religion and the church. Um, and these safe spaces you talk about I think it's so important for people to hear that their experience is real and it matters and it's not their fault.

51:05.32

Leslie Schilling

Um, in right.

51:07.46

Abbie

And it's okay to be angry. It's okay to feel everything they feel and to find safety right? So thank you for being here.

51:10.99

Leslie Schilling

Yeah, yeah, yeah, but yeah, and and the things to remember yeah is like God can handle doubt God can handle Anger God can handle grief and Temper tantrums.

51:28.55

Abbie

Yeah, and.

51:29.84

Leslie Schilling

People in power cannot and so that's the thing we have to remember is like you're already. You're already. Okay, your body's not the problem and never has been.

51:38.85

Abbie

Never has been so where can folks find the book where can they find you just want to make sure we get that and I like can link it all in the show notes before we wrap up.

51:54.17

Leslie Schilling

Um, know yeah well um, feed yourself is available anywhere. Books are sold and it and if you're into audio book at all I read it. So if my voice doesn't annoy you I read it? Um, but.

51:58.41

Abbie

And. Oh. Love that Here. It doesn't I Love your voice.

52:11.40

Leslie Schilling

Ah, my clients are like oh I love it I feel like I'm sitting in your office. Um, but um, it was fun. It was fun to read it and so yeah, it's anywhere books are sold really and then on the socials I'm really hang out most you know.

52:12.30

Abbie

Yeah.

52:25.74

Leslie Schilling

Most often on Instagram which is just Leslie Shilling and then my website is Leslie Shilling um but really on the socials probably Instagram's the best place to get me. Yeah.

52:32.10

Abbie

Perfect. Well thank you again, You're you're so appreciated you start? Yeah, you're so appreciated and grateful for you being here.

52:41.10

Leslie Schilling

Well thank you I'm I'm glad you had me on I appreciate it.