

Full Plate Podcast Episode #99: Overcoming Health Anxiety, Coping with Uncertainty, + How Food and Movement Impact Mental Health with Dr. Diana Gordon

Abbie Attwood 00:08

Welcome to full plate, a podcast that explores the ins and outs of Diet and Wellness culture, the impact of disordered eating on our well being and the path towards body liberation. This show is hosted by me, Abbie Attwood. I'm an anti diet weight inclusive provider with a Masters of Science and Nutrition. You'll be hearing from me and other incredible folks that I interview in this space as I explore what it means to divest from diet culture, make peace with food, and live freely and unapologetically in our bodies. As a gentle reminder, this podcast is not a substitute for personal medical and mental health advice and does not constitute a client practitioner relationship. I always do my best to avoid mentioning specific numbers like weight or calories, but you are the expert of you. So take care of yourself based on the topic of each episode. Thank you so much for being here. I appreciate you deeply. Now let's dig into today's episode.

Abbie Attwood 01:15

All right, hi, everybody. Welcome back to full plate. It's Abby, and I have an awesome conversation with you, for you. With you, too, I like you to feel like you're here and with me. And in these conversations, it feels like that to me. I'm constantly thinking about everyone listening and what they might want to hear more of as I'm talking to someone, but I digress. The person you will be hearing from with me today chatting is Dr. Diana Gordon. And I'm psyched for you to hear this one. I know it's a topic we talked about so much in this episode. But it really encompasses mental health, and the connection that it has to our body shame and our disordered eating or dieting behaviors. So, Diana, I'll give a little bio on her in a second. And before I do that, I want to give a quick announcement about something that I haven't talked about here much, maybe once maybe I don't even know if I have. But I've been getting a lot of questions about it on Instagram. And I'm admittedly really bad at just marketing and talking about my programs and stuff on Instagram. I don't know, it's just how I am. So what I do want to say is that I have two different types of group programs. And I just wanted to help folks understand the difference. So I have my 10 week group program, which I run like three or four times a year, the next one will be running in January 2024. And that's very structured like 10 weeks, we're together in a group we meet every week on Zoom. It's awesome. It's building this amazing community. And we go through 10 different modules on healing our relationship with food, and movement and our bodies. You can learn more about that on my website. And that's under my group coaching tab. Now the other group that I run is a monthly membership. And that's different. And this is for folks that have worked with me in the past either in a group setting or a one on one setting. And also increasingly, I've been welcoming folks based on an application process who have done this work with other practitioners too. And this is more of just like a kind of like a maintenance type group, right, like just having community support we meet once a month. It's not based on this, like programmed structured content, but we more like come up with topics every month, or we read books and discuss them. And we're in this group chat constantly with one another supporting one another all month long, month after month. So hopefully that kind of helps you

differentiate between the two. And maybe if you're kind of more, quote unquote advanced or further along your journey, that monthly membership is the one that you'd want versus the 10 week program is something you'd want as you're really diving into this initially. So that is that, you know, you can shoot me an email or an Instagram DM if you have more questions and just want to learn more about either of those. I'm always happy. Happy to fill you in. Okay, so with that, let me just tell you a little bit about Diana and about our conversation today. So Dr. Diana Gordon, is a licensed psychologist, coach and content creator specializing in intuitive eating and Health at Every Size. She combines evidence based skills like mindfulness, cognitive behavioral skills and other coping tools with intuitive eating principles. As both a psychologist and an intuitive eating certified provider she offers evaluation and treatment for both eating related concerns as well as other mental health concerns. As a person of size she draws on both her personal and professional experience to dismantle fat phobia, and to help people live a life free from dieting and we really get into all of that today truly so we cover Diana's story, her history with food and body shame growing up. And then we get into what it's like to kind of flip flop between dieting and intuitive eating and how that process is so messy. And we talk about weight bias and how it shows up in therapy and with therapists and psychology, as well as the connection between mental health and movement. We also talk about, you know, can we dye it and truly love ourselves at the same time, like, is that possible. And then we wrap up the conversation with a lot of talk about behavior change and thought change, along with tackling our core beliefs about food or body or just ourselves in general. And sitting with the uncertainty of health. And the idea that it's not, it's not so much in our control, especially not in the ways that we've been led to believe by diet culture, and how to sit with uncertainty. Like I think that's one of the hardest things that we do as humans, we hate uncertainty. We hate feeling like we can't control things in a certain way. I know that that was really hard for me personally, for a really long time continues to be but at least I've developed ways of coping that are supportive and self compassion rather than rooted in you know, what was essentially punishing, right and not actually health promoting, even though I thought it was so, so much in this there's so much in this for everybody, I promise you, no matter what you have been through, or are going through in this moment, you will get a lot out of this episode and learn a lot from Diana and I'm just psyched for you to hear it. So I will start and stop blabbing. I will get us into that conversation. I apologize in advance for some dog barking. I don't know if we were able to get it all out. But that's life. That's life. Right. We're here, we're showing up. All right, my friends, sending you a lot of compassion. And I'll see you on the other side of this conversation

Abbie Attwood 07:09

Yay, we're going Hi, Diana. Hi, Abby. We did it. We're here. We had some technical difficulties which tends to happen from time to time in podcasting land.

Diana Gordon 07:22

Yes, but we made it and we're here talking

Abbie Attwood 07:25

we did it. We persevered you are internet lists but still able to join

Diana Gordon 07:32

fingers crossed to try a few different devices and eventually something came together

Abbie Attwood 07:41

It's like life in a nutshell backwards Bagley. Well I got to start with my first question, my always question which is what's been on your plate lately food wise and then I would love to hear that in this moment of life, what feels like it's the most present thing on your plate.

Diana Gordon 08:03

Yeah, so um, food wise, I recently have been really rediscovering how delicious. apples and cheese are together. I've always loved cheese. I've always loved apples, you know, especially in the summer. I tend to move away from eating a lot of apples and focus more on summer fruits like berries and peaches and plums. And then I'm always a little sad in the fall when those fruits start to go away or just the last season and so I've been really rediscovering the joy of apples and cheese together. And I love the way that it keeps me full. If I have it as an afternoon snack it keeps me full. I just love the mix of tastes and textures so I've been enjoying that

Abbie Attwood 08:50

a lot. Yum. Okay, yeah, so funny. Okay, this question always takes me on like a 20 minute tangent. So here we go. That is so funny. You brought that up. First of all, I loved that combination growing up. It was like I came home and had a snack like that all the time after school. I feel like apples and cheese apples and peanut butter apples and cinnamon sugar plus like some frozen french fries or something you know, of course. But I love that you brought that up. What's your favorite apple? Right now? I've been paying into the all the different apples lately and I'm so

Diana Gordon 09:30

careful. Yeah, I love all sorts of different apples. There's a grocery store near me that carries like 40 Different kinds of apples. But my favorite apple is a Megan Tosh apple which isn't super common. But it's sort of in between like a red delicious and you know a typical green apple. It's a little bit sour but not as hard as a regular green apple and I just love that flavor combination and then I also really enjoy you know a good old fashioned grainy Seth just like a standard tiny green apple. And then if I'm going for red I really like Pink Lady is about love pink ladies. Okay?

Abbie Attwood 10:13

Yes I love all of those Macintosh I grew up with because like in Maine where I grew up, we used to go apple picking all the time in the fall and that was the one like that was everywhere. Like that's always what we picked. I love a pink lady. We actually have one of the reasons why I was like cracking up about this, like that. You mentioned apples in this question because we have a bunch of apple trees in our backyard. Oh my gosh, Diana, we got back. I think I told you we were in Maine for the summer when we got back from Maine for the summer. Our trees were crazy here with apples. So I kid you not. The moment before I hopped on this zoom to chat with you. I was closing out seriously probably 40 tabs of searching like what the hell do I do with all of these apples?

Diana Gordon 11:10

Oh my god. Like me, I make so many pies and tarts, you know? Okay, so

Abbie Attwood 11:17

I've made a crisp because I love a crisp. Yeah, I made an apple coffee cake. It's like a sour cream coffee cake that has apples in it. It was really good. That was a good one. I'm gonna make some apple butter today because I feel like that's really where it's at. And just like using a ton of apples up. But yeah, yeah, but then the apples and cheese. You just gave me such a great snack after this call. That's exactly what I'm gonna do with apples and cheese. Love some cheddar. Personally, yes.

Diana Gordon 11:45

Cheddar. So great with apples. Yeah, we have a couple of palm trees in our backyard. So there's always a few weeks every summer where I have so many plans. I just don't know what overwhelms me. They use them all up. So I do like I'll make a few different things like pies, tarts, and Chris. And then I also make jam, which is a free way using a ton of fruit. But yeah, it's so funny, because if only the ravens and fazes were. So when you suddenly have like 200 plums or apples. It's a little overwhelming, but it's also really fun. I had a friend visiting recently. And he was so excited to pick fruit from our trees, because he just doesn't live in a place where that's possible. So I definitely love living in California. It's one of the benefits of it. But I definitely have a few weeks every year where I'm like, Wow.

Abbie Attwood 12:39

I don't want

Diana Gordon 12:41

to deal with Yeah,

Abbie Attwood 12:43

It's funny hearing you when you were just talking. It made me think, I was actually, I met with my group, my current group program yesterday. And we were talking about food habituation. And this is a really interesting and funny example of it if you think about it, right? Like, suddenly having a complete abundance of something. And then after a while you're like, Okay, I'm over this give me the next fruit, you know?

Diana Gordon 13:05

Yeah, for sure.

Abbie Attwood 13:07

So it's so funny. But anyways, cheers to apples and cheese, because that is that is just the winner,

Diana Gordon 13:14

the winning combination. Okay,

Abbie Attwood 13:18

I could keep going. But I'll ask you about the life piece of the full plate, because otherwise, I'll be on a tangent forever. So tell me about life wise, what's like, if you just kind of think about this moment of life, what's like really weighing your plate down right now in a good way? Or in a, you know, hard way? Yeah,

Diana Gordon 13:34

You know, I'm in this phase of life where, you know, I have two kids who just turned seven. And this is a super exciting season for us as a family because they have my birthday, and they have their birthday in the fall. And then there's Halloween and Thanksgiving, and then we start to look forward to Hanukkah and Christmas. And so many holidays, and I and you know, they're, they're at this age now, where they're learning so much they're reading and they're so aware of the world. And so I'm really feeling a lot of joy and excitement. And at the same time, you know, we're surrounded by so much difficult news right now from all over the world. And I know you and I were chatting, you know, just before we started recording about mass shootings that happened in the United States yesterday. And you know, there's also two wars going on and many, many innocent people who don't have the privilege that I have of you know, picking their kids up from school and getting excited to, you know, plan a Thanksgiving meal. And so I'm really noticing in this season really holding both that my own life is very joyous and also that there are so many people suffering in the world right now and really just wanting to hold hope that we can move through this really difficult season of suffering. Yeah, you you name And

Abbie Attwood 15:00

what's really been on my heart lately, which is that, and both and the struggle between, I struggle with what you named with, like the presence and the joy in the face of so much tragedy and pain, almost this like guilt for experiencing joy, and then also this duality of wanting and knowing that it is precisely that reason that I need to be grateful for what I have right like that I can experience this joy. And I've been named on this podcast a few times, but I have OCD and news and tragic events and war like really weighs heavily on me in that way. And that kind of thought loop that happens with OCD. And yeah, I How do you? How are you waiting through these waters like that? And both because it is hard. And I've been exploring it so much for myself, and I'm deeply feeling highly sensitive? Empath that's for sure. And it's hard. It's really hard, just kind of feeling things so strongly all the time.

Diana Gordon 16:09

Yeah, yeah. I mean, I'm a deeply feeling person as well, I think that's something that's been helpful for me is to think about what I can do that can affect positive change, and to try to focus on those things. So thinking about, you know, where can I donate? Where can I volunteer? How can I spread awareness? How can I be present for people in my community, who, for example, have family or friends who are currently in danger. So I've really been trying to focus on the things that I know that I can do, and to try to let go of the rest to the extent that I can, I'm anxious, and so I can get very wrapped up in views, similar to the way that you're describing. And so when I'm in those moments of like, you know, spending a lot of time scrolling, I try to think to myself, you know, can I bring myself into the present here, right? By, for example, reaching out to a friend who has a family member in an effective place, right? Or can I bring myself into the present, even by going to do something mundane, like, you know, unloading the dishwasher, or doing laundry, and just really focus on being mindful of what I'm doing, and try not to go down the rabbit hole of too much Doom scrolling. So that really helps me and I think also just naming you know, in Dialectical Behavioral Therapy, they talk about, you know, saying, and instead of, but, and like holding that multiple things can be true at once. And so I try to hold that, like, it's both true that I feel really lucky and fortunate in my day to day life. And there are a lot of people who

don't feel that way. And that, like, yeah, those things can be true at the same time, they don't have to be in contrast to each other.

Abbie Attwood 17:57

Yeah, that's, you've named so many things that I've been trying to implement myself, just all these, the ways in which it's important to, to just hold space for the end. Both right and, and I love what you said Diana, about doing, like thinking about what you can do. I don't know about you, but it's, it's hard I've, I've just recognized how hard it is to be a provider and a content creator. In times like these, right, because a lot of what I can do, I've really brought myself back to is just support my clients, especially those affected or with close family affected and have those conversations one on one, and in group settings and, and then at the at, and then zooming out and trying to help connect the dots between the work that you and I are so invested in in terms of body liberation, and fat positivity, and truly just the, the importance, and the imperative of everyone being able to live freely in the body that they have, and how intricately connected that is to all forms of oppression to all forms of violence. Get all centers on the body when you think about it. And I think that's important, too, to think like, Oh, where do we plug in? Like, where can we use our? Our I mean, expertise sometimes bothers me because I mean, we're all just learning constantly. But But yeah, the work that we know so well, how do we plug into this bigger map, so to speak of everything that's going on in the world and use our our knowledge and our gifts and our, our connection to other people around us to actually yeah, to feel effective in in ways that we know well, rather than feeling lost and insignificant in this bigger picture.

Diana Gordon 19:55

For sure, for sure. Yeah, and I think Take that, as someone who sort of wears multiple hats, right? Who creates content, who also sees people in a psychotherapy context as their licensed psychotherapist. And then you also see people in a coaching context, right, which have a different frame. Those are all identities that I hold, they're all roles that I play, and different amounts of disclosure are appropriate in each of those roles. And so something I think a lot about in my content creation is that I do share a lot of aspects of who I am and what I believe. But I am also guarded at times with what I share. And I think, especially when it comes to current events that are tremendously polarizing, what I find is that when you dive into these issues, as a content creator, you end up getting a lot of feedback from people that's very polarized, right? People love what you have to say, for they absolutely hate it. And there's no room for nuance, right. And so I think I find that I prefer to have these conversations with people one on one, because I find that whether or not I agree with the person I'm talking to, I generally walk away from that conversation is saying, like, you know, we're to reasonable people who have reasons for feeling the way that we feel. And it doesn't feel as polarizing. But I think they are getting into these conversations online. I'm really noticing even not having done this directly on my own social media, even just participating, and comments and other people's content, I'm seeing it just so polarized, and I just don't know that that is really helpful to any of us in terms of like, I don't know that it does anything to help the situation abroad. And I know that there is a thing to help our own mental health, you know,

Abbie Attwood 21:46

so with you, it is hard. And I have the same feeling when I walk away from one on one conversations too. I mean, there's just like a deeper level of understanding and nuance that you can have that you can't have when you're just posting something online. And, and it just yeah, it always feels better. It

always feels more connected and integrated to me no matter what, to your point, the views are, are of the people involved, right? Sure. Hey, I feel so much better. And I appreciate what you said about disclosure, I think that's such a, it's just such a poignant way of time, kind of describing what is and isn't fitting for different situations. And I think one thing about this podcast is, I find it makes us all feel so much less alone and to understand and hear other people's stories, you know, and, and to even know that the quote unquote experts who are in this, these spaces struggle to have struggled, continue to obviously navigate the waters of diet culture that like we can't just like, can't just remove ourselves from. And so for sure, I'm wondering if you'd be willing to share, share a bit about your story with your body and with food, and maybe bring us up to the current moment of like, How did you arrive in this space, this anti diet? Weight inclusive space that you're in? And I'm in now?

Diana Gordon 23:15

Yes, yeah, I love sharing my personal story. Because I think that it's so important for people who are getting started in this space, or who really maybe have been in it for a while and still feel like they're not sure they have a lot of questions. I think it can be so normalizing and helpful to hear other people's stories and how they emerged from diet culture. So I love to share my own perspective on that. So growing up, you know, I was always a chubby kid, you know, that's how everybody would describe me. I remember my parents describing me that way. Even doctors described me that way. So I really started to take on that mantle, I sort of saw myself as like the chubby kid, the overweight kid. And when I was around eight or nine years old was when I first really started to diet in earnest. I think that I probably had restricted myself even before that. But that's the first time I remember actually going on a diet. And I started as a lot of people do Weight Watchers. And I started, you know, going to the watchers meetings with my mom and you know, counting my points and being weighed in every week. And I remember that I would see the way that people were harmed by the way in like, I remember being a kid and seeing people go to be weighed in by the leader and emerging cry, you know, and the thinking of myself, even as a kid like, that seems so awful seems so humiliating for no reason, you know, like, Who is this person to weigh me and pass judgment on me. But I also didn't know any other way of being You know, I really believed based on what my family told me and my doctor told me, I really believed that if I didn't lose weight that I was going to have health problems as I got older. And so my dieting was really motivated less by a concern about how I looked. And really and more by a belief that I had that like, I couldn't be healthy if I was in a larger body. And so over the course of my childhood, my adolescence, as a teenager, I continued to go on diet after diet, and you know, like a lot of people, I would lose weight, and then I would go off the diet, I would regain the weight. And then and so by the time I went to college, you know, by the time I was 18/19 years old, I had been on every diet under the sun, like Weight Watchers, SlimFast, Atkins, like you name it, I had done it, and I was fatter than I had ever been. And so I started to wonder to myself, you know, Is this really how I want to live my life, you know, I would see my friends, they would go out to dinner, and they would just eat where they want it, you know, they wouldn't be thinking about their points or their food intake. And I envied that, like I so desperately wanted to feel at ease around food. And so I stumbled across the intuitive eating bag, almost by accident, like I was in a bookstore, and I was looking at a Self Help section. And I was probably looking for diet books, or something related to that. And I saw the intuitive eating book, and I just decided to read it. And I would love to say that I read it, and it changed my life. And I became an intuitive eater, but honestly, that's not what happens. And I think this part of my experience, a lot of larger bodied people relate to, which is I read it, and I thought, I wish that could have been, but like,

these people are thin. So it's easy for them to eat intuitively, like when I eat intuitively, I'm sad. And so I don't know if it's going to be possible for me to do that. But I did try it. And what would happen for me is I would do it for a period of time. And I would go back to dieting, and then I would go back to TV and get back to dieting. And so I continued like that for a while. And the impetus that really changed me that really turned me into an intuitive eater. And that really set me on an anti diet mindset when I started grad school, and I started to learn about the ways in which the oppression of fat people mirrors the oppression of other people. And when I started to learn about life, why people don't like those people, and it's actually not about their health. And it's actually not about all these things that I had been told. But really, it's about hatred, it's about discrimination. And so when I started to become more aware of the cause of fat liberation, and when I became aware of Health at Every Size, I think as I got that education, that's what gave me the confidence to say, I'm okay with how I am. And so I've probably been a fat intuitive eater since then. And I love working with people of all sizes, and especially people in larger bodies who have struggled to eat intuitively and stick to it. Because like I said, I really understand that when you're in a larger body, the world's always pulling you back towards dieting. So I feel grateful to be out of that. And thank you for asking me to share. I love sharing that,

Abbie Attwood 28:18

I was furiously scribbling notes as you talk because you named a million things that are so important. And like you said, I'm really glad, in particular, that you shared your experience of straddling the fence and continually jumping back and forth to either side of the fence, right? The intuitive eating, whatever I mean, because it's true, like, and it's so important that we normalize that because there's so much shame and self blame and this perceived failure. If you're not just on this, not even it's not even I mean, we're so used to hearing the like, the you know, the the phrase, the catchy phrase of just like it's not linear, it's never linear, but like, not only is it not linear, but it's like messy as all hell. And you are jumping back and forth all the time. Right? Like, yeah, it's not even like a swirly line. It's like, you totally like, flip flop, because you could wake up one day and just be like, well, to your point like Diana, like saying, like, this is just not for me, it works for other people, but it's not and I feel safer and better. And maybe I'm healthier when I'm dieting and then you do it again. And you get the same quote unquote, kind of like results and then you see the same weight cycling happen. And that's and then it flip flops you back and ultimately, I think, deep down it sounds like you knew it wasn't what you deserved. Like yeah, I'm stuck on that image you described as a kid at weight watchers just watching the like shame that filled the room in that meeting. And just the just the toll that shame takes on us, like our mental and emotional health and, and we don't even usually acknowledge how much that harms our physical health to and the process, but just recognizing how deeply connected that shame is to, to, like you said, all these bigger systems of oppression, like just making money off of our shame and off of our, our belief that were somehow broken and need to be fixed and can't rely on ourselves to to truly be safe. And okay, yeah, yeah,

Diana Gordon 30:42

for sure. And I think that, you know, so many people turn to dieting, because they think it will fix a problem that they have. And that's not their problem that they're trying to fix isn't necessarily their weight, though, I think on the surface, that's often our mate. But I think for a lot of people, they think a diet will fix their confidence, it will fix their self worth, it will make them feel like, you know, they can finally live their life and do the things they want. They can buy the clothes they want and take the

vacations they want. And so like Weight Watchers and other diets, like they, they sell this and like, not just that you're going to lose weight, that your life is going to be better for having participated in this. And I think that that pulls a lot of people in. And so you know, I often tell people, like if you feel like you're back and forth, and you're a mess, and you're eating them as your body images, and like, that's completely unsurprising, because that's exactly what these diet companies want you to think. They want you to think that you're totally out of control, your body's totally out of control, your eating is really out of control. And you need that to impose order. And so I think that like this sense of like, I can't trust myself, it's not an accident that people feel that way. It's actually this sense that I think is deliberately instilled in us by again, by diet, by Fitness magazine, by all of these, these other sources. And ultimately, it's about, you know, keeping us busy, right? Like when you're busy, when you're focused on your weight, when you're dieting, when you're low energy, and you can't think straight because you don't eat anything. While you're not questioning why that is, you know? So I think it all kind of ties together. And that's really what helped me break free was the realization that yeah, these kinds of idiots, they're not looking out for me. They're not trying to improve my health, you know, they're actually just trying to make money, and they're doing so off of my pain and my suffering.

Abbie Attwood 32:42

Yes, yes. It's so true. It's, it's deliberate. It's like, it's like this evil genius system, right? That it takes credit for all of the things that happen initially, when you die it, it takes credit for the fact that the diet cycle itself, like you could split it into two, right? The first half of the diet cycle being that, where your shame motivates you to, you know, quote, unquote, get back on track, become obsessive, rigid, do the diet, engage in your disordered eating behaviors, maybe lose? Lose some weight, right? And we know that gets harder and harder metabolically over time. And then, inevitably, it, it doesn't last and that second half of the diet cycle is is you feeling out of control around food, like really thinking you can't trust yourself, this is why you need it the diet like you were saying, and then diet, culture and diet and the diet industry in general steps back and says, that's your fucking fault. Like, right that second half where you feel like a failure and you regain the weight that you lost? Like that's on you. You didn't do it hard enough. You didn't. You didn't have enough willpower. Maybe you should go on a keto diet, maybe it's dairy, maybe it's gluten, maybe you've had a post the other day that was about like, Pam spray, right? Like, like, maybe you're spraying your PAM too many seconds too long, right? Like, like so many things, and ultimately, it's all rooted in capitalism and the beauty the impossible beauty ideal, which, as you know, I've talked about in this podcast before and you have you also allude to and talk about in your content is, is uh, upholding, you know, racism and white supremacy and these Eurocentric ideals of beauty. But, coming back to what you're saying, it's selling this, it's not just selling weight loss. It's selling this whole aesthetic about life, like right, literally this promise of happiness of finding love and relationships and having wonderful sex and all the clothing and vacations where you're fully there and enjoying yourself and It's all a big farce. And yeah, and it's and to your point, it's a huge distraction. I talk about that all the time. Like, it is just, it literally steals our power and our presence and our purpose from us because we're so busy consumed with our body.

Diana Gordon 35:17

For sure, yeah. You know, I am I, I have to give this example of like, you know, I track how many books I've read a year on, you know, Goodreads, and Amazon Kindle and stuff. And like, I always tell people, when I look at them and on Goodreads forever, when I look back, I can literally tell like, the years that I

was, yeah, I read so much. I was reading, you know, success stories on Weight Watchers, or like, you know, books about how people lose weight. He wrote, like, I was constantly consuming, like weight loss related material. And so it's interesting how, like, I think one of the things I always marvel at, when I look back on my dieting is how it hijacks your brain, like, it's so incredibly consuming. And I can think of things, you know, opportunities that I missed out on, like, whether that was a social opportunity, or a vacation or whatever, because I was on a diet, and I didn't want to give up control over my foods that I could go and do that, you know. And so it really does take over so many aspects of your life. And I know they always talk about, you know, oh, you can eat anything you want. Yeah, as long as you track it. Well, like that, as long as you track it part is the thickness taking over your life, you know.

Abbie Attwood 36:38

So the book thing just resonated with me so hard so I don't have any good reads. I read a lot but you're but my version of what you're describing is like I have several chronic illnesses. And so my reading was completely centered around like all of these functional and integrative medical professionals who are writing these books that were so oh my god, it makes me so angry just like full of misinformation about like, how it's your thyroid, it's your adrenals it's your here's how to cure your illness. Here's, you know, and so that's what my mind is like, that's what I went to bed reading every night, Diana, like, I'm sure you were the same, right? Like, that's what was filling my head before I started dreaming and sleeping at night like Not, not things that got me closer to myself, not things that made me feel more integrated and embodied, but things that actually disembodied me things that actually made me doubt myself even more, feel more shame, feel more disconnection feel more broken, filled my head with more things that I thought I had to fix about myself. And it's like the same with you, right? Like, it's, it's this constant hyper vigilance of like, how we are constantly under threat somehow, if we're not doing all of these things that we're taught that we need to do about our weight, about our health. It's, and then people are surprised at how shitty they feel. And ultimately, it's because like, all of our energy is being focused on this idea that we're not enough. Yeah, everything comes back to that. That's what dieting does. It's like this constant reinforcement of like, you're not enough as you are, you're not worthy. And here's what you have to do to get there. And so you're constantly just giving yourself this message. Every time you under eat, every time you restrict, like, you're not worthy. Like you're not enough.

Diana Gordon 38:37

Totally. Yeah, I see a lot of like diet minded trainers and coaches who make this argument that you can both love yourself and be on a diet like you can both love yourself and want to lose weight. And oh, Diana,

Abbie Attwood 38:55

and I'm so glad you brought this up. Oh my gosh, keep going. Yes.

Diana Gordon 38:59

I think this is fascinating. Yeah, we talked about dialectics like and instead of that, right, I think it's a such a fascinating example of a time with I don't know that that concept really extends as far as people think it's because I think that in order, my experience with diet, is that it's pretty hard to stay motivated to stay on a diet like you know, the first couple of weeks, you know, you're pretty into it. But when you're months in, it's pretty hard to stay motivated to be tracking your points and weighing your food and all of

these things. And so I think there's a way that people stay motivated in that shame guilt cycle exactly like we were talking about earlier how these diets instill in you this sense of, there's something wrong with you, you have to change it. Good news, if you listen to us, we will fix what is wrong with you. You have to buy into that narrative, I think, in order to stay on a diet And so for me, when you're actively working to lose weight, I don't know that you can also actively be working on accepting yourself. Because you're actively working on trying to change something about yourself, you know, and it just doesn't feel like those two things can exist at the same time. I'm curious to hear your take on it. Because I guess I think this is something that comes up a lot in the diet world.

Abbie Attwood 40:24

Um, I just I'm, I think you just said it. So well, the way that you described like, this, I that is exactly what you see online is like these claims that like, you know, you can do this thing. As an act of self love, you can have positive self esteem, self worth while also wanting to lose weight. And, you know, I appreciate your perspective on this too, because I have a lot of thin privilege. And I think it helps to, obviously, I mean, for every, every, you know, lived experience matters, but like, especially in a larger body, like that's particularly something that comes up right, this idea that, well, I think we're just so conditioned to believe that loving ourselves does mean, like, quote, unquote, taking care of ourselves by losing weight. And it's that health narrative, that health anxiety that you said you grew up with, in particular. And that gets so deeply ingrained in all of us. So whether it's about weight loss for quote, unquote, health, or whether it's about elimination diets, and autoimmune protocols for chronic illness, whatever it is, right? Like, we get really gaslit into this idea that that really is like pursuing self care, right? Yeah. And that's what we have to break, I think that's, I think that what you're naming is breaking down these core beliefs that we inherited, right? Like, because it can feel like self love, it can feel like self care, but that's very different from it actually coming from a place of self compassion, and authenticity, and being truly aligned with your values, like your chosen values, not the bullshit values that we've adopted from the culture and been indoctrinated into. But like, so much of this is figuring out what do you value versus what have you been taught to value? What are the thoughts that are yours? And what are the thoughts that are the cultures and for sure, because until we can like, like, kind of just dissect that and differentiate, then it is always going to feel like taking care of ourselves is in alignment with, you know, eating, quote, unquote, healthy or perfectly and losing weight, and all of these things. What do you think about that? And especially because I know what you work on? I know, I'm sure that you work on this in your practice? know

Diana Gordon 42:58

for sure, yeah. So you know, I, one of the things I will often you know, tell people is, it's totally okay to, you know, bring your skepticism along with you. Yeah, so no problem, you know, if you, if you don't like your body, but you still would like to try into the meeting, no problem. If you're really not sure that you can be healthy without losing weight, but you want to try, also no problem. So what I will often tell people is that sometimes it can be difficult cognitively, to work through some of these core beliefs. And what we sometimes need is for our behavior to change. Because when our behavior changes, we have new life experiences. And that also changes our cognition, it changes our core beliefs. So the way that I will often look at this is when I have someone who says to Me, you know, I'm in a larger body, and I do love myself like this, you know, it's, it's not about not liking how I look or anything like that. But I really feel like if I don't lose weight, you know, my knee pain is going to get worse or like my blood sugar

control will get worse. What I'll say to them is I'll say like, we can 100% Think about ways of supporting your health. Those ways just may not be the ways that you're thinking, right. And it will also work with people around really understanding that the truth is, what we do, like both what we eat, how we move, doesn't actually have as much impact on our health, as we want it to, most of how healthy we are is determined by our genetics. And it's also determined by factors we don't have a lot of control over like our socio economic status, our race, you know, where we live, like there's so many things that impact our health that we have zero control over. So I think there's the combination of saying number one, I don't think that your way In your health is linked if you think they are and then talking about the research data, like talking about the evidence that supports that. And then also saying, you know, what are the things like knowing that we don't have full control over our health? What are the things we can do towards feeling healthier? Right? Like, you know, we want to talk about having a movement practice that feels both joyful and supportive. So we want to talk about foods that you eat that, you know, help you help you feel like your blood sugar is better regulated, like, there are still actions that we can take that are health promoting, that have nothing to do with weight loss. I

Abbie Attwood 45:35

love what you just said, I love what you just said about that health, the pursuit of health is basically what we're saying is like, it's not synonymous with weight loss, right. And the pursuit of a better life. Even right, if we're just thinking even bigger picture more holistically, it isn't synonymous with weight loss. And you know, what this reminded me of is that, and I'd love your take on this given that we kind of ended up here is that, unfortunately, in our anti fat society,

Abbie Attwood 46:13

In therapy, a lot of therapists will actually suggest things like exercise, and quote unquote, healthy eating as a way to feel better mentally and emotionally.

Abbie Attwood 46:32

And so there's a lot of weight stigma that can show up. And it's, it's really, it's hard to because I'm sure you see this too in this space. We know that folks with mental health conditions are much more at risk for developing disordered eating behaviors and being attracted to dieting in the first place. And we also know that restrictive eating and dieting actually increases the rates of anxiety and depression and other mental health conditions. And I would love to get some of your thoughts on how this how you see this show up in the psychology space in general, the mixed messages that are out there about how we can possibly treat this like feeling better about ourselves with these quote, unquote, healthy behaviors that can often send people down the rabbit hole of dieting and disordered eating, and not to mention the fact that when we look at the big picture, like you just named, so much of this just has to do with our genetics and the social determinants of health. And that the true behaviors that matter are the ones that are rooted in self compassion, the ones that are rooted in truly taking care of ourselves, not the ones that are rooted in shame and trying to fix ourselves. Yes, yeah.

Diana Gordon 47:52

So you know, I, I hear people dissenting, that kind of advice, and I cringe, and it happens a lot more often than it should happen. And I think it speaks to weight bias and health care providers in general, which I think is a whole other topic that we can dive into if we have time. But speaking simply to weight

this, like within the psychotherapist, I definitely think that so we know from the data that there's a pretty strong association between regular movement practice and lower rates of depression and anxiety. There are even studies that have compared in people with mild to moderate depression that have compared either taking an SSRI for a few weeks or starting an exercise regimen. And people seem to get about equivalent results. And so what we know from that is that movement really is helpful in managing our mental health. Unfortunately, people take that and they apply that advice to every single person that comes in front of. And the other thing that we know in mental health is that we're trying to prevent extreme outcomes. So we're trying to prevent people having one problem, coming to therapy and getting advice that either worsens their problem, or it gives them a whole new problem. And so as a therapist, where I sit on the sort of like recommending that people move spectrum is, I really try to work with each individual to understand their relationship to move it. Because I think that for someone who has no real concerns, like eating Wise, who has no eating disorder history, either in their family or in their own life, and who really feels like a movement is something that would be a benefit to them. It's great advice to tell them. Yeah, you should start a movement practice. That's going to help you with some of your sentences. But I think when someone has a history of eating disordered behaviors, restriction, dieting, or other things that could possibly be due to negative outcomes, you need to be a lot more careful about recommending that people exercise. And so I, I just take the same approach with everybody, which is to say like, I try to first evaluate what the concerns are and whether recommending movement can be harmful. And then for people who I think I don't want to recommend movement to outright because I have concerns about how that will affect them, again, I'm going to think with this person about, you know, what would feel good to you to add into your life, you know, some clients that I work with sign that it, it's really helpful for them to add in something very low impact and like body awareness. So it is like yoga or pilates. And that doesn't bring up the same feelings for them that say, cardiovascular exercise, I have other clients who decide, you know, I think I'm gonna start, you know, walking to pick my kids up from school, you know, that gives me 20 minutes of walking is a and is a very low stakes, low pressure way of starting to move. So I think that generally speaking, as a therapist, working with people towards developing a movement, practice is healthy. But we have to really make sure that the movements that we're recommending are healthy. And for a lot of people taking a complete break from these, it is not only healthy, but it is necessary in order to really reset their relationship with movement. And so what I tell people is that if movements non problematic for you, do it, if it is problematic, put a pause on it until you can work through the ways in which it is problematic and figure out how to do it safely. Because I completely agree with you that it's counterproductive to encourage people to move without really understanding how that piece of advice is going to affect that. Does that answer your question?

Abbie Attwood 51:53

Yeah, yeah. And you took it into a, you took it over into movement, which I think is gosh, so important, because movement? Yeah, it is. It is. So it is so connected to our mental and emotional health. And only if it's done in the interest of our true well-being right, not from a place of punishment, or compensation for what we ate or in the pursuit of weight loss. And the research has actually been really clear on that in terms of people who are deemed obligatory exercisers in scientific studies versus people who are, you know, more what I would call like, you know, maybe intuitive or joyful. exercisers, people who just move their body purely because it's something that they like to do. And, and I agree with what you said too, about needing a break from movement, and how important that is. And I often

liken that to the same way that we need to, you know, perhaps, perhaps go through a period of time where we don't eat a lot of foods that we ate, when we were engaging in dieting or disordered eating behaviors, like we need to allow ourselves full permission to eat all foods and the equivalent of that, in, in the movement space is like unconditional permission to rest, right, like, unconditional permission to eat, and unconditional permission to rest, because both of those are countered to the moral imperatives that are put out in front of us by the diet and fitness industry, right like that move, like we're taught that, like we should be exercising, we should be eating a certain amount of vegetables, all of these things and, and in order to free ourselves, we have to allow ourselves to kind of swing to the other side on that pendulum, and let it let it center itself. Rather than forcing ourselves back into things that can for a lot of people be really traumatic, right, like, for sure, go back to what you were saying. I mean, that's the importance of these one on one conversations and being able to actually deeply address access and understand somebody's history with their body without and before blanketly recommending things that could cause harm, or making assumptions and we see the same thing in doctor's offices, right when a doctor will see a patient in a larger body and just assume that they're not moving or eating vegetables, right? And just be like, well, this is clearly what you need to just just start walking and you know, it could be a person who runs marathons and a fat body and they would just assume that they're not doing that and I think that can happen in all sorts of spaces. Therapy, medical providers, physical therapists everything right. But yeah, I do come from a place of like movement having been really central to me. I'm OCD and just an eating disorder. And I certainly took a long break from it. And I had to come back to it in a way that was completely rooted in the present moment is kind of the best way I can describe it, like, not movement for no other purpose than does this feel good, right?

Diana Gordon 55:20

Yeah. There was another component to your question around, you know, the prescriptive advice around the types of foods you should eat to support your mental health. And it just feels important to me to address that. Because as far as I am aware, there is actually really no scientific evidence that supports changing your diet in order to improve your mental health symptoms. I see, yeah, there's not, there is not. So I just want everyone to hear that, like, if you have depression, or you have anxiety, there are effective safe treatments out there. But those things are not changing your diet. And I think that like people treat, you know, there's so much emphasis out on like, oh, you know, these foods are superfoods, and you if you eat, like, you know, walnuts, that's going to improve your creativity, and like, you know, all this stuff that's out there. And what I will just say is that whatever Nominal Benefit that you may or may not get from eating any one of these, like, if there is any benefit at all, right? Whatever that Nominal Benefit is, has got to be outweighed by worrying about whether or not you should eat more walnuts.

Abbie Attwood 56:39

And the same goes for physical benefits. That's, I'm so glad you said that. Yeah, like, Yeah, cuz you get touted, like, all these things are touted as health promoting in these really specific ways. And I do. I love that you said that, because I do want everyone to hear that, like, that those kinds of claims are akin to the idea that supplement companies will make these claims just on their bottle, like, just because they have vitamin B 12. In it, it's like, will be, you know, good for your, you know, improves neuromuscular function, like all this stuff. And it's like, what are we talking about here, you can't just reduce things

down to the nutrients that they have, and make that make that a causal relationship with certain, like aspects of our mental and physical health. Like, that's just not how bodies work.

Diana Gordon 57:24

Yeah, yeah. And I just think, yeah, like I said, there are safe and effective treatments out there. But you know, that, like, these dietary changes that people advocate for, are not effective and are probably not safe. So I just think I know, it's important for you to hear that I believe there's no research or evidence that says that any particular food is gonna have a material impact on your mental health. And so you know, there's no obligation to eat in some particular way to support your mental health, I think the best thing you can do for your mental health, when it comes to a relationship with food, is to work through those food rules and restrictions, and to really enjoy, hopefully an easy and intuitive relationship with food, that's going to take you a lot further than trying to incorporate particular things into your diet.

Abbie Attwood 58:18

Yeah, and I think that what, what happens often, and this is what I witness, and I experienced this myself, that just having worked with so many people over the years is that it, it might make us feel better, temporarily because of the idea that we're controlling something that feels so uncertain, like our health, right? And so changing the way that we eat and believing wholeheartedly in some expert guru, you know, telling us that this is going to make us better in this myriad, these myriad of ways, can contemporarily make you feel better, right? So if you think about somebody with anxiety, having this kind of thing that tethers them and gives them a purpose, and a sense of control, or maybe distracts from the emotions that they don't want to feel, and the same could be true for depression or any number of things like, it can feel better for a little while. And I definitely experienced that, like it's kind of this numbing out of the real root emotions and feelings, and core beliefs and, and, and being really careful not to attribute that like let's call kind of like placebo effect on to a specific foods like a walnut. Right? Like you said, it's like no what, what are we feeling better about? Is it just that it's giving us a sense of control, a sense of safety, a sense of certainty in a really messy world. No diet, no way of eating is going to prevent us from experiencing the side effects and symptoms that are moving through this world, and having a human body, like it is hard, sometimes it is just playing hard. And it's always, someone's always going to have some quote, unquote, fix or some something that will, you know, make you feel like you're doing something about how hard that feels. But the real thing, it comes back to really, truly feeling better has to do with being more connected to yourself, trusting yourself, knowing yourself, and doing things that aren't rooted in, like, neglect, and self abandonment, in the interest of what the diet industry has promised us. It's all just so complicated, especially with mental health.

Diana Gordon 1:00:51

Yeah, and I think, you know, so often, when we're facing a health challenge, whether that's mental or physical, we feel scared. Yeah, exactly. And we, we want to latch on to something that we, you know, we think will help us and, you know, an example that I often give people is, I had a sister who passed away from a brain tumor at the age of 25. And I was 21, at the time that she passed away. And something that she and I used to talk about is that she was naturally quite slender, and I was a naturally larger person. And people would always talk to me about how, you know, my I wasn't in good health, and I had to work on my health, they never said anything like that to her. The tumor that she got was something she got by random chance, like it had nothing to do with what she ate or didn't need, or what

she weighed or didn't weigh, it was purely random chance. Anything, it's just another thing that illustrates, like, she's a person who you would have looked at externally, and people would have given their stamp of approval, like, you know, she looks healthy, right. And yet, you know, she had this thing that happened to her that was totally random. And, you know, she ended up dying from it. And so I just think that, like, you really can't tell how Healthy People are by looking at them. You can't even tell how healthy you are, but looking at yourself. And so I think we just can't draw conclusions about people's level of health, again, based on what they weigh, or what they look like. And so I think the whole diet, culture promise of like, going on this diet is going to improve your health is flawed in that truly, nobody can tell you that, you know, and I think anyone who promises you like any form of coaching, they're like, I'm gonna improve your health, like, they gotta be full of it. Because there's no possible way that somebody can promise you that, you know, experiences like that, and it really drove home for me, you know, like, fortunately, like I am, that and also in fantastic health. And I feel very fortunate about that. And I know that again, it has nothing to do with the eating and exercise choices that I'm making. Yeah,

Abbie Attwood 1:03:05

That's so important. It's so important to remember that because it's so easy to get caught up in the narrative and the discourse culturally, those are the primary ways that we can achieve health and happiness. And, and it's much it's much more convenient or, and it's like, I don't want to say it's easier, I want to say maybe it's like, it's it's much more just simple, right to think that way, and believe that it's like this really overly simplified idea. That gives us a semblance of control, when like, the reality is, we don't have that. And that is so much scarier. Like, like you said before, like that we don't have that much control over our health that we can't really tell how healthy we are, not even just like, based on what we look like. But even based on a lot of biomarkers often like we can, we can't really conceptualize or define health into something distinct because somebody could have fantastic cholesterol, but the deeply lonely, isolated and depressed somebody could have excellent blood glucose management, but they are infertile, and they can't have children and that is devastating that like we can't we can't reduce health to something so simplistic even when it feels easier and simpler to do that. It's not it's not real, you know, it's not real and and then we just get so caught up in that health and healthism and then that way, and that how destructive that is to all of us and our well being like the irony of that right that like we can spend our whole I feel like ultimately we could spend our whole life obsessed with and pursuing health believing that it's going to make our life better and just miss out on our life entirely.

Diana Gordon 1:04:55

In the process. Yeah, yeah. 100% don't like, you know, I think that for a lot of people, when I have someone who presents to me, you know, for services and they say, you know, I want to improve my health, we'll often just spend some time sitting with cash, you know, it makes so much sense. You want to improve your health, you know, you have all these wonderful things in your life, you're telling me about, you know, you have a family and friends and you have this job and like, you really want to be in your very best health, you want to be on this planet for as long as you can. And then the docile you can be, and that totally makes sense that there's a valid way to feel. And it's so hard to sit with the reality that that is And so we find ways of sort of trying to exert control over it. And again, I think that's where diets do a really good job of like, tapping in to this knowledge that most people have a fear of, you know, dying before they are getting right to

Abbie Attwood 1:06:05

tap into them. So

Diana Gordon 1:06:07

isn't it perfect to tap into everybody's fear about that? And be like, Oh, well, you don't want to die young? Well, here's something you can do. Right? Yeah. Yeah, it's a lot harder to sit with. It's so hard to feel that way. You know, I feel that way too. And that's not necessarily something that we can do anything about, you know,

Abbie Attwood 1:06:32

where if someone's listening to this, because I know a lot of folks in this community, like they're grappling with that, right, like this idea that maybe they spent years, if not decades, believing that they had a lot of control through food and movement. And I think what you and I are both saying is like, there are a lot of things we can do to support our health, obsessing over what we eat, and being extremely rigid about food and exercise and feeling a lot of shame about our bodies and pursuing weight loss. Like, let's explore how that might not be part of that, like part of what is health promoting.

Abbie Attwood 1:07:06

But if someone's listening and thinking like, gosh, how do I sit with that uncertainty?

Abbie Attwood 1:07:18

What are some steps? I know, this is like a big question. But I think this, this is what a lot of this boils down to is just a fear of letting go of control. Right, like, and, and I think a lot of what we need to do in this process is cultivate coping tools that aren't, that can, like, replace those more maladaptive ones that we were once using. And if someone's listening and struggling with that, and just feeling like every time things get hard or everything, every time something gets certain, or their anxiety gets worse, or their depression gets bad. They find themselves on this autopilot going back to these restrictive behaviors, like, what are some just really, maybe small, one or two small things to just start to maybe think about or explore if you're in that place?

Diana Gordon 1:08:12

Yeah, I love that question. So you know, I think one of the things I want to say to people who are in that situation is that it totally makes sense that you feel that way. And that, again, that you've been set up to feel this way. And so I think for me, like when I first started to move away from dieting, like one of the things I struggled with was just I felt really dumb, I felt done that I had abused my body the way that I had. And I felt like it was my fault. And so I want to say to people, that it's not your fault. If you feel this way, if you're reflecting on years or decades spent dieting, and trying to control the size of your body and control your health, like it's not your fault. And that's been your experience. And there's hope for it to change, because I think that's where I want to start. Hope. One of the things that I will often tell people is that, you know, uncertainty is such a scary thing to a lot of us as human beings is one of the things that makes it less scary. To do this, think about actually how you had been managing and coping with uncertainty already today without even realizing. So like, for example, right now, you know, you don't know where your loved ones are exactly. Like you think you know, right? Like you think you know, they're in school or at work or at home. But you don't actually know because you're not talking to them

right now. But you are tolerating a degree of uncertainty, even though everything is probably okay in the world, you don't actually know for sure. So you're not sitting here thinking about it. So I want to point out to people that we actually tolerate a tremendous amount of uncertainty in our day to day, but we don't get spun up about it. But it's because we have this belief that uncertainty is dangerous and scary. And when we really start to grapple with it we get scared. So start by noticing and congratulating yourself and honoring yourself that you do have skills for tolerating uncertainty and that you're currently using those skills. And that you can learn to apply them to this type of uncertainty. And then I think the other quick and easy thing that I encourage people to do is working on spending time sitting with the motions in general. So a great way of doing this is having a deliberate mindfulness or meditation or self compassion, practice, a time during the day, when you sit down, and you allow the thoughts and feelings that are present for you to just exist. And you gain practice, sitting with those thoughts and feelings. And I'll often encourage people when it comes to mindfulness or meditation, to actually try to do it at a time when they're not feeling distressed, because a lot of people start trying to meditate when they're feeling anxious or feeling fat. So I'll tell people, like try to build this muscle of learning how to tolerate difficult emotions, by first just learning to tolerate whatever emotions it is, you're having. Practice spending some mindful time with yourself every day. Because the more that you build that confidence that you can tolerate what's happening to you in the present, the more that you're going to build your confidence in tolerating uncertainty and other difficult things.

Abbie Attwood 1:11:34

Those were so good, Diana, ah, so good. I just, I love you for those because those have both been really, I mean, you obviously couldn't have no way of knowing this. But those things exactly have been so transformative for me over the past few decades. Because this is certainly the thing that I struggled with the most certainly why I use food and exercise, right? To feel more certain. And I just want to say like, those have been so effective. And I've worked with clients through those two and that kind of the gentle exposure approach that you suggested and all of that, which is just don't choose the highest tick highest ticket item, right? Like practice sitting with just your everyday emotions, you know, like, yeah, like Rosina comes to mind. For me, it's like, can I just sit with the fact that I'm annoyed with my husband for not cleaning out the frickin coffee pot? You know, like, right, like sitting with something just like that. And rather than sitting with the discomfort and the pain of body shame, for example, right, and processing something that feels like, it feels less threatening, right, to your overall safety in this world, you know, and I think that, if any, yeah, I really love that. Like, if we can just kind of, that's where we leave this today, which is that, can we start to practice being with ourselves in gentle ways, and explore emotions that aren't like a 10 out of 10, but maybe like a five or a six out of 10. And work with those, and work up to the tolerance and, and the trust in ourselves that we can do hard things that we can sit with hard feelings and survive them. Ultimately, that's it right that we don't need these other behaviors. And in doing that, we're kind of coming full circle to what we were talking about in the beginning, which is like, we are actively undoing core beliefs just by doing something different by behaving and taking a different action by questioning the thoughts that are in our head by knowing that not everything that we think is ultimately true. That is us making progress like that is that is the journey, right? Like for sure unwinding this stuff.

Diana Gordon 1:13:51

Yeah. And like in cognitive behavioral therapy, which is like my area, people, people often think about, you know, we have automatic thoughts, like the thoughts are just popping up on the surface, right? Then the layer below that we have intermediate beliefs. And then below that we have core beliefs. And so often people have these automatic thoughts that pop up, they're like, I don't like myself, I can't stand it. I can't stand feeling this way. And again, they try to fight that thought with logic, right? They try to change it. And sometimes that works really well. Like I have irrational thoughts all the time, just as everyone else says, and sometimes unable to talk myself out of them really well. But sometimes I go in circles, I can't talk myself out. But I can focus on changing my behavior. So for example, for someone who's struggling with this, you can wake up and be having a ton of thoughts. I want to get back on a diet. I hate myself. I don't know why I'm trying to shoot the thing. What was I thinking? Those are just thoughts. Yes. Yeah. Don't have to change them. You don't have to fix them. You don't even have to try to talk yourself out of it. you can still decide how you're going to behave? Are you going to weigh out your breakfast cereal? Or are you going to choose not to, right? And when we change our behavior, like cognitive theory is very clear on this, that when we change our behavior, we also change our thought patterns. And so like, again, as a cognitive therapist, like I do very much believe in working with thoughts on this cognitive level. But I also think sometimes, we can't get out of our own way. And we need to focus on behavior. So if you're having a day where you're like, you know, my body image is terrible. I feel like restricting myself, can you recognize I'm having all of these thoughts, and in my behavior, I'm gonna stay consistent, and like, live in alignment with my values, whether or not my thoughts are along for that ride today, you know?

Abbie Attwood 1:15:51

Yes, yes, I know, this is I know this in such a profound way, like, personally and professionally, like, just the idea that our thoughts aren't facts is like, yes, is, is life changing? You know, because we, in doing that, we create some space, right? We create, like, maybe some cognitive dissonance, maybe just start to poke holes. And these beliefs we've had for so long about ourselves, because that's what that practice gives way to being able to poke holes in a lot of the negative self beliefs we've held, since we were really little, you know, because it is, is ongoing practice. It's like decisions you make every day, right? Like you said, about the cereal and the weighing the cereal like, it can feel overwhelming, but it starts to subside, the more you practice it like it will be exactly easier. And just trusting that that is real, I think that is knowing that it is hard in the beginning. And it does get easier. I always like to say dieting starts out easy and gets harder and harder. And this work, healing, truly healing and coming home to ourselves starts out harder and gets easier and easier. Like, yeah, it's a discomfort that lessens with time. Sure, yeah. Surrounding yourself with people who can validate that and can remind you of who you are, you know, despite how you've been taught to see yourself. Yeah.

Diana Gordon 1:17:23

And it's, I always tell people to like, you know, dieting relies on this idea of starting over or you know, like, oh, you ruined your diet. Gotta start over the next meal. You know, intuitive eating actually doesn't rely on that at all. Intuitive Eating is continuous. It doesn't stop. Like, I view the years that I've been alternating between eating intuitively and dieting as yours, I was doing intuitive eating, not because dieting is the same as intuitive eating. But because during those diets, I was immersed in the work of trying to change the way that I think about myself and my body so that I could break free. And I wasn't able to break free at that time. But that doesn't minimize that I was trying, or that like I wanted to be an

intuitive eater. And so like what I tell people is like, do you have an intuitive eater for an hour or 10 years, you're an intuitive eater. And even if you go back to dieting, even if you have a meal, that doesn't feel intuitive, or you have negative thoughts about yourself, that doesn't take away the progress that you've made. So you're not starting over. Like you're just in it. And it's messy, and it's chaotic. And as you said, it gets less messy and chaotic and easier with time.

Abbie Attwood 1:18:39

Yeah, such a good place. It's such a good place to land here, like, and I just want to thank you so much for just everything you brought today and for taking the time to be here today, even when your Wi Fi is out.

Diana Gordon 1:18:55

Well, I can't watch any TV. So you know, what else can I do?

Abbie Attwood 1:18:58

Right, you know? Yeah, totally. Oh, Diana, oh my gosh, can you tell everyone listening? Because I know if they don't follow you already, they're going to want to after this conversation, can you tell folks where it's, you know, where to hang out with you and where to learn from you. Totally

Diana Gordon 1:19:15

Guys, um, I love creating content on Instagram because I really believe that these ideas should be out in the world and as broadly disseminated as possible. So the best compliment you can pay me is to follow me and share my content with people who would find it useful. And so I'm on Instagram as Dr. Diana Gordon. So you can find me there and linked in my Instagram bio, I have a link to my mailing list and my website which details all of my individual coaching offerings and my courses and things like that. So love to connect with anyone who might be listening and answer any questions. You might have heard everything I've said today. And yeah, thank you for giving me this space. Thank

Abbie Attwood 1:20:02

you for being here. I'm gonna link to all that in the show notes for everyone. So it's easy to find you so you don't have to scribble any of that down. But I have to just have to tag on to what you just said and say like, it's just been such a joy getting to know you over Instagram. And just everything you put out into the world resonates. You have a really wonderful way of sharing information and making it make sense and making people feel held at the same time. So I just want to thank you for the way you show up on social media because I know it's not easy. I'm in a season of life where I'm like, Who this stuff is just like we started talking about like it's hard. And yeah, and so I just want to just appreciate you for how you show up and encourage everyone to follow along because I know they'll get so much out of everything that you create and put out there.

Diana Gordon 1:20:53

Awesome. Thank you so much Abbie, this was so wonderful,

Abbie Attwood 1:20:58

thank you

Abbie Attwood 1:21:08

alright, so that is our show for this week. I am so grateful to you all for your support, your compassion and your presence here. Well plate is edited by Brian Walters, administrative support is provided by Ashleigh McKeel. Cover photography is by Anya mcinroy. And it's produced and hosted by Abbie Attwood. This show is made possible by you and your support on Patreon rather than through advertisers. So you can support me and my work, including this podcast and my newsletter by joining Patreon at [patreon.com/full plate](https://patreon.com/fullplate). That is also where you'll receive bonus episodes access to asking me questions and other special content. If you're unable to support Patreon, another way to support us is by leaving a rating and a review. And to make sure you're subscribed to the show on whatever podcast app that you use. Thank you for being here for being a part of this community. You really keep me going and you give me hope. I'll see you back here next week.