

-- Speaker 1 00:00:28 Welcome to another episode of Dr. Embassy's self-care cabaret podcast. I'm Theresa Melito-Conners, a PhD level self care expert in the greater Boston area with a passion for helping others record the importance of caring for themselves. I am honored to welcome dietician Anna Sweeney to the podcast today. This is truly a special episode for me. I had the pleasure of working with Anna back in 2015, when I was at my proverbial rock bottom with my disordered eating size bulimia, and although never formally diagnosed anorexia, I was desperate for answers. I had been battling the fat phobic medical bureaucracy for years, trying to get help. And finally, through sheer force of will. I landed in Anna's office. Anna is a certified eating disorder, registered a certified, intuitive eating specialist and owner of whole life nutrition counseling in Concord, Massachusetts. She is an expert in the treatment of individuals, struggling with eating disorders, disordered eating and emotional eating.

Speaker 1 00:01:39 Anna combines her knowledge of the science of nutrition and experience in treatment of eating disorders with direct, compassionate, and heartfelt care to help her clients realize the pleasures of living a whole life. I owe my recovery to Anna. She held space for me and made it safe for me to let go of all the spiraling and toxic habits I had developed over the years while trapped in diet culture, I did not fully appreciate all that she was doing at the time, as it took a while for me to understand and grasp the concepts of what she was teaching me, I had to recognize and unlearn deeply ingrained generational patterns and societal constructs in order to heal. This is where I was introduced to intuitive eating and health. At every size. I will be forever grateful for our time together. Anna also proudly identifies herself as a disabled woman, as she lives with a chronic illness. Anna is a recognized public figure on social media, where she does not shy away from talking about chronic illness, wellness culture in how to navigate these tenuous spaces. This truly was a special episode for me and I hope you will agree.

Speaker 1 00:03:00 Thank you so much, Anna, for joining me today on the Dr. MC self care cabaret podcast, I feel like I have a celebrity with me cuz you are a celebrity and with your massive social media presence, but also your celebrity in my eyes for the time we spent together is something I will always cherish. So thank

Speaker 3 00:03:19 I'm so delighted to be here. I don't know how I feel about celebrity, but especially because of like how I know about like you and your shoes and all of the things that make

Speaker 1 00:03:30 Celebrity

Speaker 3 00:03:30 Status. Well, anyway, I'm just, I am delighted. I'm delighted to be here. Well,

Speaker 1 00:03:34 You're a celebrity as far as I'm concerned. So <laugh> so to take that for what it's worth, <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:03:40 I'll

Speaker 1 00:03:40 Take it. Um, so we're gonna dive right in here. I know for myself, when I showed up in your office there about, well, I don't know, six years ago at this point, what I received from you was different than what I assumed I was going to get in terms of the guidance and whatnot that you offered. But it was, I will say exactly what I knew. So can you tell me just a little bit about your journey and how you became an eating disorder, dietician and an intuitive eating specialist?

Speaker 3 00:04:08 Sure. So I actually, and I actually think about our journey together like me six years ago is different from the me that I am today. Um, so I'm still grateful. Like, you know, we're here. I became an eating disorder, dietician in response to my sister having developed an eating disorder and I was taking my sister to a mall. She, her journal was open. She was an avid journaler and it said, well, I guess I have an eating disorder and having no personal experience myself. I got her into the car and yelled at her the entire way. You're so beautiful. You're so smart. Everybody loves you. You're so good at sports. Why would you do this? Da, da, da, like being granted. I was 17 years old, 18 years old. I didn't have any idea what I was talking about you and my sister's struggle would go on to inspire and allow for me to enter a feel that has blossomed and grown and changed in.

Speaker 3 00:05:16 So, you know, in so many ways, --

-- um, my conventional nutrition training it from in college was very, very weight centric and leaving college and being in the greater Boston area, being around, surrounded by a multitude of health at every size practitioners learning what I learned about intuitive eating, ultimately becoming a certified eating disorder specialist, whatever, but more broad, ugly, um, really, really leaning into the idea that my client's bodies know more than anything that I have to share. And my job is to be like in accompaniment on, on a journey to food piece. If I do my job well, that is, you know, that's, that's the goal, but I can't believe I've been here 14 years. Like that's, that's wild.

Speaker 1 00:06:12 I think that's awesome. And it's, I mean, I still remember and use some of, of the tools, a lot of the tools actually that you taught me, like, as you were just talking, I started remembering how you would say the rule of threes when it came to like a meal or, and what that means is if I remember correctly was like three different food groups and at any given time and have, and then even with snacks and just making sure though, really, if you don't do that though, it's okay. And I think that was the piece that was really one of my biggest lessons to learn that it's okay to be hungry and to eat.

Speaker 3 00:06:48 Mm.

Speaker 1 00:06:49 What a concept. Right. And like the, the concept of even like hunger cues and even listening to your body. I mean, this was just, this was radical to me in your, in your office six years ago. I remember thinking, well, wait, no, I just need you to tell me like, how many almonds can I eat? What can I just tell me what to eat? And when, and I will do it, like, that's what I was expecting you to do. I wasn't expecting you to turn it around on me and give me that power to decide what and when it's okay to eat and when it's okay. Not, and then all foods are okay and there's no bad foods wild. It was wild. Now I understand it, but it took a long time and I'm sure this is true for other clients that you've worked with. It took a long time to really be able to internalize that.

Speaker 3 00:07:37 Absolutely. And, and intuitive eating as a paradigm is culture shifting, right? It's not accessible to everyone. And I think about intuitive eating with a lot more nuance than I did even six years ago. And I can't know more about your body than you know about your body. I am here to learn with you. And ultimately everybody who is listening to this podcast, you, me, all of us, we are our own best advocates and our own. Like we are the only humans who can possibly know what we need.

Speaker 1 00:08:13 Yeah. We think we're smarter than our bodies, but we're actually not. We need to listen to all those messages that our body is giving us. And if you're willing to slow down and listen, you can learn a lot. And

Speaker 3 00:08:25 What a really beautiful, cool thing that can happen when we move away from judgment. When we move away from like the really noisy omnipresent, thump of diet culture, and food rules and the, like all of the, you know, everything that we've all grown up with and moved back inside, uh, we have so many more abilities to respond to our needs and it's just, there's there's beautiful room for work to happen.

Speaker 1 00:08:58 Yeah, absolutely. I love that. I think we may title the episode, move back into your body. I like that. We'll see. See if we come up with something else as we, as we move through our time together here. Um, so I'm wondering if you could tell me a little about what your self care routine looks like.

Speaker 3 00:09:18 Sure. So my body has changed really significantly since I have seen you six years ago. I don't remember. I don't think six years ago I was even using a mobility aid. I might have been using a cane, but I was probably hiding it. I don't remember you,

Speaker 1 00:09:33 You were, you had the, a cane, but it was here and there, you weren't using a wheelchair at that time.

Speaker 3 00:09:40 So, and I don't use a wheelchair now either. I, I use a Walker and I have electrostim devices on my legs to like pick up my feet and this is evidence of privilege and I am most grateful for having the ability to continue to emulate. And that being said, self care looks it for me has never been like jazzy. It's never been about getting my nails done.

Speaker 1 00:10:09 <laugh> tha --

-- ng about nutrition labels. I don't know. I know very little about nutrition science now at this point in my life, because I took those classes a million and a half years ago. And the whole point of intuitive eating is actually about guiding a person back to themselves back to the designation of like expert of body, right? It's not about outsourcing body wisdom. It's about saying, I, I got this, I got me, I got me, I got me, I got me. And this takes practice and patience. And it can be really, really beautiful when, you know, the practice isn't enacted. And it just becomes a way of being in a way of interacting with food. But I find that it's much more dynamic than just than just food, right? It's, it's, it's much bigger than that.

Speaker 1 00:16:26 It is. And it's it's so like, if I think about myself too, we're also talking about, you know, not society, whole kind of pushing this, this agenda, this fat phobia and diet culture and wellness, everything, but also we're talking at least in my family, you know, and probably others I'm assuming, and maybe even everybody generations of this, like, um, weight issues in my family go back as far as I know, with everybody suffering and not being in tune to their body and really getting engrossed in that diet culture, which is very intriguing. It seems like it's gonna be the answer. And it's so sneaky at how it's so embedded and so ingrained into just about everything. And at this point, so it's really unlearning generations of this and, uh, historical. Um, it's just, it's wild when you start to really unpack it. And I remember too, you know, being in your office and, and beginning to learn these things and thinking what, like what, this is not, this is crazy talk.

Speaker 1 00:17:34 Like I can't listen to my body. What does this even mean? What does she mean? No bad foods. Like this is against literally against everything I had been taught to believe up until that point. There was something about Anna though that let me believe her and trust in her, but also hold space for me to trust myself in that process. And it took a long time. I can't pinpoint exactly like when things started to click for me, but I, it took a couple of years even to realize, because you go through almost, um, a morning process when you start to let go of the apps that I was obsessed with and my obsessive meal planning and my obsessive exercising, like to let go of all of those things that were my, what I thought my whole life and what I had to be attached to at all times to let that go and to be a okay, it was a grieving process.

Speaker 1 00:18:32 And then as your body begins to heal from all that restriction, often it's accompanied by weight gain. So that, and that was my experience. And that was very difficult to be okay with and to understand. And thankfully, you know, I have a very strong support system and the support of Anna at that time and other people in my life, my mom and my husband, mostly, um, but others as well that were like, that could support me in that, in understanding. But it, it got, it was rough. Like it took though a long time, I think for me to understand that it was okay,

Speaker 3 00:19:08 Mm-hmm <affirmative>

Speaker 1 00:19:09 So it's really, um, it's wild. And I hope that our listeners find, um, you know, a lot that they can, maybe they hearing or seeing pieces of themselves, or maybe this opens up some in intrigue for them and they wanna go exploring. And I, I highly recommend the intuitive eating book by Evelyn Trioli and at least rush or health at every size by Dr. Linda bacon. Uh, those are both fabulous.

Speaker 3 00:19:37 And I think what you just talked about, like, so like 85% of Bo, like outside of bodies are dictated by genetics. And so we think about like historical, like struggle. You talked about like your families having a hard time with, with their, their body weight for as long as you can remember back. And so when you were just speaking to your listeners, I think it is really important for us to really think about like, what were the messages that my parents were sending to me? What were the messages that they received from their parents? Maybe even a generation back

Speaker 1 00:20:20 Oh, yeah. Goes way back.

Speaker 3 00:20:22 Yeah. And, and that's a really important thing. Most of our outsides is genetically predetermined. There are some things that we can, you know, modify, but not --

-- a whole heck of a lot, at least not in the long run without disorder to be quite Frank and the idea. And like, so body respect is the kind of the updated version of health at every size, which would be the one that Linda would recommend now that having the ability to kind of ultimately accept, and this can be a really hard process, but accepting one's natural body size gives permission to stop fighting against this thing that is like trying to fight gravity. Like you can wanna float and tough shit. Here we are. This is planet earth. I hope I can say that word here.

Speaker 1 00:21:11 That's okay. We can put a little, we'll put a little E on this episode. No, I'm just kidding. <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:21:17 You know, me there,

Speaker 1 00:21:19 <laugh>, it's all good going a little deeper than, um, some of the other episodes, which is great. I think it's great. So, and it is really hard and we'll, we'll make sure in the episode notes that all of these resources that we're talking about are linked as well for folks to be able to, to follow up with. And I know like even recently, like, and it is, it is a journey I can remember. I think it was, oh, I don't know, maybe two years ago at this point, my mom and I were having a conversation and she's, you know, we have a great relationship. I'm able to kind of call her out. If I hear any little diet, culture, things, still eing in there and into her, her thought processes and whatnot. And she has to, you know, she she's been on this journey as well and has struggled with weight, her whole life and body issues and body acceptance and all of that.

Speaker 1 00:22:03 And one day she was talking and I just kind of looked at her and I said, now you're ready, intuitive eating. And she was, and we had talked about it previously, but I don't think, I don't think she was ready to hear it at that point. And, um, so she, she just kind of looked at me and I'm like, yeah, now, now you're ready. And so we kind of, you know, made sure that, you know, she had a copy of the book, or I think she might have logged into my audible to listen to it. And I had her read Dr. Bay book as well. Well health at every size. I don't actually think I've read body respect. I will look at that. I do have heard, uh, their newest one radical. Is it radical belonging? Yeah.

Speaker 3 00:22:38 Yeah. Also a great book, but not this.

Speaker 1 00:22:41 Yeah. So, and kind of, you know, and I love being able to point other people, especially my mom, but of course, other people kind of in the right direction, at least to be open into learning about other ways or looking at other potential, I don't know, lifestyles or ways of being with this because, you know, being entrenched in di culture is not, not a good one.

Speaker 3 00:23:04 Yeah. And I actually have some other resources that I think, uh, well, I'll add them at the, and I'll like leave them and show notes.

Speaker 1 00:23:12 Okay, cool. So I'm sure that, um, some folks listening to this, they may also be struggling with, with maybe their body or their relationship with food. And so I'm wondering, is there like one piece of advice or one key takeaway that you would offer to our listeners?

Speaker 3 00:23:30 I think, um, this is not a thought. This is a fact, the most common nutrition error. If there is ever to be an error that I see being made by adults over and over and over and over again, it is not eating enough food. We are a culture that celebrates eating less in a way that ultimately represses metabolic function. In some ways that's not super important to me, but we need food to be able to do the things that we do. And I hear people say all the time, like kids are growing, they need to be eating meals and snacks. We might not be growing, but we are still machines. We're still organisms that need food all day long. So my hope for your listeners is that they take away from this, the idea like in the morning time, if you have breakfast and then you notice yourself getting a little bit tired around, I don't know, 10 o'clock for me, I get hangry at 10 and around two, I get tired.

Speaker 3 00:24:41 And I think back to being in like high school and having a car and getting an ice caramel latte and having that be like, oh, I don't need breakfast. I might have latte. And like, like caffeine and whatever. And then we move into college or anything that happens after like high scho --

-- ol. It's so normalized for people to say, I'm so tired. It's two o'clock in the afternoon. Let's get a go coffee. I invite you to have a snack with your coffee. Your body needs more food than you're probably giving it. And that is like a universal statement. It is not body size specific. It is not diagnostically specific. It is just, we are a culture that prizes not eating. And that is act
Speaker 1 00:25:31 <laugh>. I wholeheartedly agree. Not only do we prize, not eating, we prize like being busy and being burning the candle at both ends. And that's just, that's the opposite of self care. You're not listening to your body. If that's how you're behaving and the messages are subtle. Like sometimes it's subtle what your body tells you, but you have to move back in to your body and really listen to the messages that it's telling you. So I know during COVID Anna, you started, uh, virtual connection. Can you tell me about this? This sounds really cool.

Speaker 3 00:26:14 It is my baby, and it's still a thing that's happening, but so I closed my office on a Thursday. I mean, we were all terrified. We didn't know what the heck was happening. And that weekend I decided that it made sense to do something on social media to support people that had eating disorders. I on Instagram, like say, good morning, hi guys, happy, whatever. Like have a great day. And I've come to like feel really, I, I, I feel very, very honored to have the following that I do and to actually have the interaction with the following that I have. And I thought about, you know, what, my clients were telling me what they were saying. Even on the Friday following, you know, everything being locked down, I'm talking to people who are saying, I can't find even my safe food in my grocery store there.

Speaker 3 00:27:14 Like we were all, I couldn't get food delivered to my house. And as a disabled person, that's something that I have taken advantage of. <affirmative> we couldn't get enough hand sanitizer. We couldn't get toilet paper, this, like, we didn't know what we didn't know. And I thought that it made sense to create a safe place on the internet for people with eating disorders or recovering from diet culture, whatever, um, or just humans join me for a snack. And I would answer their questions. So at the beginning, virtual connection was me dialoging with people in messages as my following group messages and comment were no longer appropriate. So it, virtual connection was entirely based on questions. It like direct message questions. So I was answering generally answering questions about eating disorder, recovery, about boundary setting, about diet culture, about navigating wellness messages, about, you know, keeping ourselves safe on the internet, uh, just general like health things, all and all under the guise of being a social justice forward and informed practitioner and being really, really thoughtful about the people who, I mean, they, it was kind of a self-selected situation.

Speaker 3 00:28:50 People chose to join, and it it's. I mean, it it's wild when Instagram allowed, created I G T V and allowed us to save them. I have, I think like about 50 weeks of saved videos in the year and however months it has been I've missed two weeks. Wow. Um, it, because it is just, it is, it's really, really meaningful to me. It's really important. I know when I say repeatedly, I am not your dietician, but I am a dietician and I speak, I mean, and as you see on Instagram, I speak about my lived experiences. I talk about my many layers of privilege and I feel really, really grateful to have the opportunity to offer some auxiliary support. And it's, I mean, a huge compliment, cause I have other colleagues that say they watch and they're like, oh, I learned this and I'm gonna take whatever.

Speaker 3 00:29:53 Like that's amazing. And I, I, I don't think I am a big deal at all, but it is a really big deal to me that people choose to, you know, honor, it was just choose to interact with me in a way that is vulnerable and really, really important. And virtual connection moved over to zoom a couple of weeks ago because everybody says monetize, not really looking to try to make like up money, but so I'm on zoom. And that way I can have closed captioning happening live in real time. And I can email everything to whoever regs start for the session. Um, it's different. I get to actually see the faces of people that I've been talki --

-- ng to for the last year and a half. It is. I mean, it's incredible because I feel like I, I don't know them and they don't. I mean, you kind of know me cause I've been just like sitting and talking to my phone right year and a half. You eating food and talking, answering

Speaker 1 00:31:06 Questions, talking very openly and sharing very openly about lots of different topics. I think Anna's Instagram is fabulous. We'll make sure folks know where to find you. So any, this is still going on so anybody can join. And I, I looked on your website. I think there's a, it's a very small fee, um, for it.

Speaker 3 00:31:25 Yeah. I'm not, I'm not looking to make a lot of it's \$20 a month and it's helping me pay for web design and helping me to think a little bit harder about maybe putting together a program. Cause people have been asking for a program and I was supposed to put together a program because we had so much free time and a pandemic, but like I have a full private practice and I will always be a private practice dietician. So that has not been a high priority for me.

Speaker 1 00:32:01 Well, I think it would be awesome if you do find some free time to do that, but in the mean to, uh, virtual connection sounds amazing. I was actually, it's funny. You mentioned that other like practitioners and whatnot have joined when I was reading about on website, I thought, oh, maybe I'll join <laugh> virtual connection. It looks very cool

Speaker 3 00:32:19 Rat. Like it makes me so happy.

Speaker 1 00:32:23 That's awesome. And I wanna ask you one more question in before we wrap up, because you say this a lot and I, I know I mentioned it earlier, but no bad foods and people really bristle when you say that to them, because it's the opposite of what we think, right? We think of course there's good foods and bad foods. There's junk food, there's health, food, there's clean, clean food, whatever, whatever yucky diet, culture terminology people use for it. And I love saying to people, no bad foods. And I know I got that, uh, from my time with Anne and have certainly adopted it as my own. And um, so what, tell us a little bit more about that.

Speaker 3 00:33:07 So firstly bodies digest food factually, not judge, right? Like it doesn't matter if you're eating a twinkie or you're eating like whole wheat bread with peanut butter, like carbs and fat are broken down into carbs and fat. I'm not saying that nutritionally, they are the same thing. But when we start putting judgment on food and saying things like this is a bad food, or I'm so bad for eating this food or blah, blah, blah, blah, blah. We're giving food a lot more power than it actually deserves. And oftentimes I will, I've talked to a number of people who talk about, I can't have this in my house. Cause if I have this in my house, I'm just going to eat this because it's in my house. And if you put that food up on like a sexy food list, and this is like, these are the foods that I wanna eat by myself.

Speaker 3 00:34:04 I don't want my friends to know that I'm eating. And I like this is a very special thing. That's just between me and that food. Usually those are like the quote unquote bad foods are I'm naughty for eating them, giving foods so much more power than it actually deserves. And if we're able to back out of the judgment around food and just get curious around, you know, what, what would taste good and what would it be like to be like, how would I feel after I eat X, Y, or Z food? This takes a lot of practice because this is reject of what we are taught from the time we are very little, you and I grew up with the food guy pyramid that had at the very top fat and oils used sparingly. <laugh> right. With actual,

Speaker 1 00:34:53 Yep.

Speaker 3 00:34:54 Dating. I'm dating us right now. And I I'm. Am I correct about that? Yeah. Okay. So it's different now, but like not really. So the fact that like the fact is everything can be a part of a healthy, and it doesn't even have to be healthy. You don't owe eating healthfully to anybody. And if we took the power away from food, if we didn't look at food as good or bad or clean or dirty, and just saw it as food, the way that our body digests it, which is just as food. And we're able to tune in a little bit more to like, what does it feel like? How do I feel when I eat this food? And I use this example a lot, like thinking about if there is this bad f --

-- ood that I try so hard to not eat, say, we'll talk about donuts.

Speaker 3 00:35:47 And I say, okay, so all foods are good foods. And on Tuesday we're gonna have a donut only day. And that means at breakfast, we're gonna have donut nuts. Like let's, let's go dunk it in some donut in some coffee. This is delicious. Let's go. And morning snack comes along and we have some donut holes. And this is so exciting because we've not given ourselves permission to do this. And then at lunchtime we're like, Ugh, I get to get a different kind of donut. Maybe I'll have two or three. And we go through the day. And by the time we hit dinner, how do our bodies feel? What, how would you feel Teresa? All you did was eat donuts,

Speaker 1 00:36:25 Not good. I would feel heavy. And just, yeah, <laugh>, I'd probably be craving something other than donuts at that point. <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:36:34 Okay. You'd probably feel tired. You'd probably feel a little bit, Ugh. Like I could, I could do with some something else and that's not because, and I just chose donuts here for the sake of this conversation, but that's not because we have judgment about donuts being bad. It's because our bodies naturally want variety naturally. They do <affirmative>. And so it's true that if donuts have been on the bad food list for whate, for however long and donuts are euphemism for anything that is kind of in the bad food category, it's true that in the process of making peace with that food, someone might consume them in ways that feel really confirming a, of their need to be on the list, right? Like if I give myself permission to have this, I'm gonna eat all of this over and over and over again, and it might happen.

Speaker 3 00:37:30 And then I would still keep asking, like, what are the judgments that we're still holding about this food? Because our, our bodies naturally want a variety of different things and everything. Everything is nutritious, whether something is nutritive, right? If EV if somebody gives something, gives you vitamins and minerals or proteins or carbs, whatever, or something is just high in sugar and gives you quick energy or something tastes so, so good. All of these things are health pro. Everything matters, right? Like nutrition and taste are not mutually exclusive things. Food should be, it's all, all of it, all food is good food. There's no such thing as bad food, just a plenty of waste of time.

Speaker 1 00:38:14 Absolutely. No such thing as bad foods. And I think about that, that really resonates with me because I think back to a, when I, before I came to see you and some of the patterns that I had was living in and the struggles that I was experiencing with my eating disorder, having I used, I used to give food power. I would ban foods for periods of time. And then all that happened is then I just craved it. And then when I finally got my hands on it, I would over indulge in it. Not because my body, like, because I gave it that power. And when you give food power like that, then you just want more of it. And I actually, this is a Testament to, to how far I've come the other day, I was placed in an order for groceries and I wanted chocolate.

Speaker 1 00:39:00 And so I went, I was, I use Instacart and grocery delivery. I've been doing it before the pandemic, before it was trendy. Um, it was something I started doing, which is, um, a wonderful service. But anyway, I bought a bag of little mini kit, cats and little mini peanut butter cups, no big deal. They've been sitting on my counter, just hanging out. I've eaten a couple here and there. My husband's eaten a couple, but I'm not as I used to say back when I would see you, Anna, I know I used to say this to you. I would vacuum through it. If that had been, that had been six years ago, that of candy would be gone by now. I'd be beating myself up about it. I'd be over exercising. I'd be trying to restrict and compensate other ways to make up for that, that terrible digression of eating all that chocolate. And it just was, oh my God, such a, a vicious cycle to really be caught up in. So I hope that, you know, folks listening may hear this and think, maybe start to think about how they behave and how, how they label food as certain things. And maybe, um, they'd be willing to take the steps towards a different mindset around food.

Speaker 3 00:40:13 I'm so delighted to hear that. <laugh> I have this same wish for everyo --

-- ne here.

Speaker 1 00:40:20 Yeah. Thank you. So is there anything else Anna, that you'd like, um, LA listeners to know,

Speaker 3 00:40:29 I think this has been a really comprehensive conversation and I, so, so, so appreciate it. Um, and I really hope that people who are listening to this podcast think about, and, and I invite them to think about the way they interact with food and the way they choose to nourish themselves or move their bodies. However, like this, these are very, very basic, but also very challenging parts of self care. We are not talk about manicures. We are not talking about elaborate things. You have permission to eat food that is delicious. You have permission to eat food for the sake of vitamins and minerals. You just have permission to eat. And I wonder what it feels like, have a dietician say that to you, you can eat. And I think you should eat more universally. Everyone listening to this call. <laugh> I feel strongly about that. You should eat and you should eat more than you think that you should. If you are, if you have a kid and they are eating more food than you, this is a problem. Unless you're dealing with like an adolescent in a gross, smart that maybe you don't need to quit with them, but,

Speaker 1 00:41:52 But generally speaking, <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:41:54 Generally speaking. We don't need enough. We don't need enough. And then we get castigated at doctor's appointments or bodies changing, which bodies do change, right? This is the nature of having a body is that it's like this thing that evolves and it's it's appropriate, bodies are supposed to change. It is unfortunate that we live in a culture that condemns body change in one way and celebrates body change in another. Uh, so uniformly again, body diversity is a norm, and this is where going back to body respect as a really great reference anti diet by Christie Harrison as a really great reference. Even the what's Christy Harrison's podcast called

Speaker 1 00:42:42 Oh wow. Food, psych

Speaker 3 00:42:43 Food psych like the, so I can't believe I just did

Speaker 1 00:42:46 That. That's okay. Uh, I learned that from you six years ago, <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:42:51 Food. There are so food psych, um, oh, there's a new one. That is so, so, so, so, so, so good. Um, it is not on my brain, but I will get it to you after, when I think about it, we are at a point in the world where there is a discussion. There, there is a shift, right?

There's a difference in the noise. And we saw this in the pandemic. We saw a change like diet culture took two weeks to repackage itself and then start lying to us about, um, anti-inflammatory things or like build your immune boosting foods as though, like, we want boosted immune systems. But the number of people who are looking for clean, eating went way, way up and the amount concern of like, what's gonna happen to my pandemic body. Like for hopefully you survive it. Like that's, that's a nice outcome. And now I'm like really all over the place. Cause I could just keep going.

Speaker 1 00:43:49 <laugh> well, that's okay. I think there's a lot of key takeaways there in what, what you're saying,

Speaker 3 00:43:58 But I'm, it's gonna go back. If you're a grown person you're invited to eat every single day, multiple times a day and you need more food probably.

Speaker 1 00:44:10 And she says that with a smile <laugh> very much. No, I know. And I remember what it was like to have a dietician look at me in, in her office and say those things to me. And I remember thinking what, like, no, just tell me how many calories I can have a day.

Like, just tell me how many whatevers and I,

Speaker 3 00:44:32 That's not how it works.

Speaker 1 00:44:33 No, it was, it was earth shattering for me to have, it was life changing, I guess, is a better way of putting it. And it, it really was. And I mean that Anna, I, I can't thank you enough for, um, the time we spent together. I very much appreciate it. And I know I've said that and I, I also introduced this at the episode is a very special episode to me. So where, um, I wanna make sure folks can find you, so where on social media and your website and where can we connect?

Speaker 3 00:45:04 I am on Instagram more than I should be. <laugh> um, and I'm at dietician, Anna, and I think that's a great place to start. My website is, is linked there. Anyway, I a

--

-- I'm not your dietician on Instagram and I have a full private practice in Massachusetts. So I'm not taking new clients, but I'm so excited. I'd be so excited to hang out with you on the internet.
Speaker 1 00:45:28 <laugh> well, or, but people can still perhaps do virtual connection, even if you're not, oh,

Speaker 3 00:45:33 Look at you hyping my,

Speaker 1 00:45:35 So those ways there's ways that we can connect, even if she's cuz she did just say she's not taking new clients, which is, um, exciting. That means that the practice is full <laugh>, but um, there are still other ways to connect. She does share a lot of really valuable tips on Instagram. So that's fabulous. So thank you so much, Anna. I am so grateful for the time you spent with us today and I'm sure our listeners will find this episode very valuable.

Speaker 3 00:45:58 Sure. Hope so. It was lovely to see you. I'm so grateful to be here.

Speaker 1 00:46:08 This was such a special episode for me, reconnecting with Anna and sharing more about my journey and right. Recognizing how far I've come is truly a gift. This episode was jam packed with lots of information. I hope you found it valuable. Feel free to listen to this episode more than once as there is a lot of information to process everything Anna shared is so, so important for everyone to understand, especially if you struggle with your relationship with your body and food. Also, we did mention a couple of books by Linda Bacon. This interview was recorded back in October and since then some information has come to light regarding their work. Linda Bacon's work in this arena has provided a very one-sided perspective. They are not the creator of the health at every size HAES or HAZE movement and their interpretation is not inclusive. I have provided some additional links in books to check out for more information and for a more inclusive perspective in the episode notes for you as well.

Speaker 1 00:47:05 I encourage you to learn about the HAZE movement from the creators, the association of size diversity and health as D a H. You can also learn more about the current circumstances regarding Linda and the harm they have caused this community on the AEs D H website. But thanks for listening to this episode, remember to subscribe and rate this podcast on your preferred player, the ratings help us grow and share the message of self-care. If you have comments, suggestions, or questions, reach out directly by emailing podcast at Dr. MC selfcare.com. That's Dr. R MC selfcare.com and come join the cast party at Dr. MCs self-care cabaret on Facebook and Instagram at Dr. MC self-care or on my site, doctor MC self-care dot com. Be sure to like subscribe and love me across all my social media platforms for the most UpToDate information on self-care see you next time. Stay well and do good.

Speaker 1 00:50:13 Hi again, this convo was so good that we ended up continuing to chat after the initial interview was over and the tape was still rolling. So please keep in mind. This was more casual at this point when Anna and I were chatting. So there is explicit language used and specific eating disorder behavior mentioned. So please keep that in mind if anyone else can maybe hear this, that you're listening to, but please enjoy this bonus conversation between Anna and me as it provides more depth to these important topics. T all right. Cool. And we can, um, I don't know, do Jeff saying that this might, he may split this into a two-part episode,

Speaker 4 00:50:49 Right? I'm very, very, very loquacious. Jeff. I don't shut the bug up.
<laugh>

Speaker 1 00:50:54 It's all good. It was good. You being

Speaker 5 00:50:57 Quiet. That's not gonna help us

Speaker 1 00:50:58 At all. I know. I know I didn't invite you on here, Anna, cuz you <laugh>.

Speaker 3 00:51:02 I am not quiet. I haven't gotten more quiet in the time that we have been apart.

Speaker 1 00:51:07 Oh, now she has a bigger audience. She's only gotten louder. <laugh> no, I love it. And it's imp it's important. And I wish like I could just scream it from the rooftops and like you'd, you'd be so proud. Like the advocacy that I do now, like I don't take any shit. Like if I got, if I go into a room and I'm like, I need a chair without arms. I'm like, I speak up because I know that I am, I can be a voice for those who don't have a voice. And there --

-- are people that aren't able to do that. So I'm gonna do that.

Speaker 3 00:51:38 Amen.

Speaker 1 00:51:39 And, and I even, I pushed my mom to do it too. We recently went to a doctor's office and um, there was no seating without arm and I could not sit in those chairs. I didn't fit. And I actually went up to, I, the one was like, oh you can sit. I go, no, actually I can't. And she just kinda looked at me. I go, I don't fit in these chairs. Do you have a chair without arms? Oh we don't. We should probably get one. Yeah, you should. Cuz I doubt I'm the only, I know my mother also comes here and she doesn't, she doesn't fit in the chairs either. So ridiculous. And I, I had to do it at my job where my boss, I was like, she had these little tiny armless chairs that she expected me to sit at. And I was like any chance we have, um, any armless ones. She was able to get them, not a big deal. It doesn't have to be, you know, to be, you know, cool, crazy about it or rude about it. But you do have to speak up. Yep. I've done it in theaters. <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:52:36 That's, that's huge. It is. And I actually think about that in term, like, well obviously you are a Broadway gal, but like thinking about like access, particularly in an old like Boston, like nothing is built for even like normal shaped bodies.

Speaker 1 00:52:58 No, no. Even somebody that's very tall. I mean like they may be, you know, tall and lanky. They may, their knees hit the, hit the front and it does like, they can't fit like it's wild, but I've had to, um, you know, it was one theater. We went to a few years ago and I was like, this is for problem. And so I'm like, that's all right. I used to work in the theater. I know they hold seats down front. I know they have to have other accessible seating. Um, so we're just gonna find the house manager <laugh> and I did. And I very politely said, I'm, I'm really sorry. I cannot sit up there. Not a problem taken care of.

Speaker 3 00:53:35 So next time you don't even say I'm really sorry. Well,

Speaker 1 00:53:38 Right. That's true. <laugh> that's true.

Speaker 3 00:53:42 Show me to the accessible seats. Thank you so much.

Speaker 1 00:53:46 Yeah, no, I know it's hard. It's and it's it's, you know, I feel very privileged and grateful that I am able to use my voice and speak up and I want to do more of that too. As time goes on.

Speaker 3 00:53:58 Do you talk about that on your podcast,

Speaker 1 00:54:01 Accessibility

Speaker 3 00:54:03 Using your voice?

Speaker 1 00:54:05 We have. Haven't not yet. We haven't necessarily <laugh> we are still recording though. So if there's clips from this, we can always use them, but

Speaker 3 00:54:15 This and this, maybe isn't a conver this is not necessarily a conversation with me, but like if there are other fat people who listen to your podcast having and is like having, listening to a person, talk about making space for her own body. That is powerful. Yeah. And you obviously are a fucking force

Speaker 1 00:54:42 <laugh>

Speaker 3 00:54:43 And like I say that because I know you and not, everybody's gonna be able to, you know, be as assertive as, as you paint me, um, in your Lutons. Okay.

Speaker 1 00:54:54 <laugh> I don't actually wear my Lutons anymore. You know, I still haven't collecting dust in the closet, but

Speaker 3 00:55:00 Tell them.

Speaker 1 00:55:01 I know. So I know everybody's

Speaker 3 00:55:03 Back is happy to not have those.

Speaker 1 00:55:05 Well now I actually wear things that like are comfortable.

Speaker 3 00:55:08 Thank you. <laugh>

Speaker 1 00:55:10 What a concept.

Speaker 3 00:55:12 It's nobody got time for that. Um, yeah, no, it's just, there is something I think really, really powerful. And I like, and this is now I'm just talking to you, like, I think about the way that you were so good at your job and organizing people for like, when you would do those big, I wanna call them like symposium. Yeah.

Speaker 1 00:55:37 The big annual conference.

Speaker 3 00:55:38 Right. And like, like you just got, you just got stuff done. Mm-hmm <affirmative> um, and I'm, I am delighted that you have, I mean, this like what you would call the, I don't know, like a pet project or some auxiliary source

Speaker 1 00:56:01 Of side hustle righ --

-- t now,

Speaker 3 00:56:03 But, and I, but I really hope that it can be more than a side hustle. And I think part of more than the side hustle can be about you encouraging and welcoming people to take up space and like telling them how you do that. Right?

Speaker 1 00:56:19 No

Speaker 3 00:56:19 You're because this is a, this is a, like a human rights thing. Mm-hmm <affirmative> this is about social justice for all bodies. And the fact is there are plenty of humans who live in fat bodies and don't do things right. Because of the bodies they live in. Right. And that, and like the I'm it's so weird. I don't, I'm not trying to compare, but like in, from a disability perspective, thinking about when I'm in the world, like in my wheelchair, I take up really different space than I would have if I'm just like a person walking around and people are not awesome mm-hmm And so, and like, they all are more awesome because I'm thin and pretty and white than they would be if I were none of those things. But like, you, you should be like a force here. Like

Speaker 6 00:57:21 Know you,

Speaker 3 00:57:22 We should know you in like the eating disorder community. We should know you in the Hayes community here. Like I actually really fervently think that like, I think, are you on the Boston Fattys Facebook group? Like you should be running shit <laugh> because

Speaker 1 00:57:42 No, I'm not. I'm on Reagan and Chastain's group. I think it's fit fatties. Awesome.

Speaker 3 00:57:46 Yeah. And Reagan saying it like, Reagan's amazing. We were texting yesterday. Um,

Speaker 1 00:57:51 No, I, I love her and I love when she talks about too. Like when you talk about privilege, like I, when I hear her talk about having like personality privilege, like she was the first one to really conceptualize that for me, I'm like, oh, I have that privilege actually. Oh, you,

Speaker 3 00:58:04 Oh, yes you did.

Speaker 1 00:58:06 Oh

Speaker 3 00:58:06 Yes you do. And so you having personality privilege gives you, I mean, you can do anything you wanna do, but I think there's something really powerful about, I mean, even maybe like the evolution of your willingness to take up space, ask, ask for this, that you so rightfully deserve. Um, cuz like hearing you talk about like not going, like just you remember like before your wedding in your fucking double session exercise classes and

Speaker 1 00:58:46 Triple some days.

Speaker 3 00:58:47 Yeah. I know was

Speaker 1 00:58:49 Like, I know

Speaker 3 00:58:50 About you get like still having like punch cards that like you had classes wanted to figure out how to finish 'em and

Speaker 6 00:59:00 It just like your body,

Speaker 3 00:59:06 This is your body and you deserve to be here and you deserve to be in all of places and you just taught me something new that there are always different seats in other places in theaters.

Speaker 1 00:59:19 They have to, I think like, I didn't think it's like a rule. Like it's probably part of ADA really that they have to a house manager, even if it's a sold out house, a house manager always has an ACE in their pocket and the ability to change seating. That's my understanding. Um, and I know that from when I was a box office manager at a small regional theater in mass, the juices like you have, because you have to, because what if somebody shows up in a wheelchair to buy a ticket at the, like, you can't turn 'em away. So, you know, rightfully so they, they have to have something. So that show we were at, it was at the chal in Medford, the theater was horrendously tiny. I don't even know if Jeff truthfully could have sat in the balcony seats that we had originally Burch, but I'm like, it's all right, we're gonna go talk. I'm gonna talk to the house manager. He was very kind. And um, even if he wasn't, he best interest to be kind, but um, they ended up moving us. We were like in the fifth row orchestra, like in folding chairs, like we were fine. <laugh> no big deal.

Speaker 3 01:00:19 I, I think like I just, I think that's really cool. Like cuz Reagan talks about doctor like doctor's offices and you like the and sure. But like the face that you just made, like you have your stories.

Speaker 1 01:00:36 I know. No. I know. And I, you're actually not the first person to tell me

-- stuff. And when I think even about how, how I got to you with that, that doctor, that horrible nurse practitioner person, and then she was like, oh, you've done all this. And you still just can't lose the weight. And then she says too bad, you couldn't take fat pills. Like if I had been somebody else that could have killed me, like that could have been the last, like I could have gone off and done something even more dramatic and drastic than I had was already doing and disclosing to this woman what I was doing and abusing laxatives and exercising to the point of like ridiculousness. And that was her answer. Like lady, if I had been somebody else like that, could've that advice could've ended my life. Thanks.

Speaker 3 01:01:31 I think that you're right. <laugh> and I, and I think, I mean you have such an effervescence there and like if you, if you want to talk about advocacy, like, and the, they that you've had to navigate, like your listeners want to hear that because you're not the only person and Reagan doesn't have exclusive rights to those stories. And like, there are plenty of other fat activists on the internet that are talking about life in fat bodies and each eating disorder advocacy and all of that stuff. But like you, you just have a sparkle.

Speaker 1 01:02:17 Well, thank you.

Speaker 3 01:02:17 It's not, I mean, it's like,

Speaker 1 01:02:19 Well, and I, I also <laugh> I also have the cred. I mean, one of the reasons why I went to get those fancy letters after my name is I don't want anybody to have a look at me and be like, what does this broad know? She knows a lot. <laugh>

Speaker 7 01:02:32 Great.

Speaker 3 01:02:33 So, so use, use the, the letters and the, the thing that came way before the letters, it just like, this is, this is really fucking cool. And I really, I like, I, I am in my brain turning over and I don't wanna, we can think about this on another time when we're not actually recording and involving Jeff, sorry, we could stop

Speaker 1 01:02:58 Many points. No, he's fine. Sitting here.

Speaker 1 01:03:01 So right now people generally hire me and it's mostly been schools hire me to come in or like do a virtual workshop on self-care. So I teach people like 10 domains of self-care and we do deep breathing and, and I'll talk, I really don't get in those workshops. I, I don't really get into anything controversial, like intuitive eating, which can, you know, I told you that woman accidentally unmuted herself <laugh> and like, so I tend to, but then we talk about, I also talk about, I do growth mindset workshops. I do trauma resilience, self and self-care workshops and um, just all sorts of different topics, uh, really related to self-care, but honestly, like what I'm selling at this point, like, I'm still figuring that out. Like me it's me, I'm selling me, but I also like on my blog, I share like recipe, like I've done some original recipes and I do, um, I've done plus size fashion advice I've done. Um, and then the podcast is kind of a, a newer thing. I'm still kind of trying to figure out like <affirmative> where the, the niche really is.

Speaker 3 01:04:06 Yeah. And, and like, I don't, I don't have any specific feedback. I'm just thinking like the number of humans. I mean, before we met, were you di like, had you been treated for an eating disorder?

Speaker 1 01:04:24 No.

Speaker 3 01:04:25 Okay. Like that by itself is a really significant thing.

Speaker 1 01:04:29 That's a problem.

Speaker 3 01:04:31 And that's not like you're not by

Speaker 1 01:04:33 Yourself. No. And you know why? I mean, and I know why you taught me why? Because my body didn't fit the stereotypical look of a, um, someone with an eating disorder or someone with anorexia, truthfully mm-hmm <affirmative>. And when you

Speaker 3 01:04:49 Starving person, huh? A starving person. Yeah.

Speaker 1 01:04:53 And when, so I was celebrated for my efforts. Nobody, nobody told me I was doing anything wrong. Of course not. And that, like, I remember you saying that to me too and being like, what, what, what do you, oh my God. And then realizing like, yeah, I was featured on transformation Thursdays and, and like, you know, oh, I know. And like all the crazy, but I mean, I didn't know. And we're talking generations of, of men and women in my family also like celebr, you know, buying into that --

-- mentality and whatnot.

Speaker 3 01:05:31 And I can see that this would be like really soul fulfilling. Mm

Speaker 1 01:05:35 Oh no. Like, I love it, like talking to you right now. Like, this is, this has been wonderful. Like I'm so grateful that to even have this connection with you again,

Speaker 3 01:05:45 I mean, like, this is your passion and education. Right. Bring it to people.

Speaker 1 01:05:51 Right. I feel like I'm on the cusp. Like we're gonna, like, <laugh>, it's gonna, like, it's gonna happen. Like really cool things have, have already happened. I mean, I would, I want this, I'm done with the bureaucracy of public school. And like I've only been in this role now for, this is the third school year and it's just, I can do so much more at a much larger scale. And I know that, like, I know that in my soul and like the, the it's just, I mean, I know I'm making an impact. Like the kids, I work with the special ed kids, the outta district kids, like the most vulnerable, the most heavily involved, like I know on a small scale of my work is impactful, but it's, it's, I bring more than that to

Speaker 3 01:06:33 Amen

Speaker 1 01:06:34 To life. <laugh>,

Speaker 3 01:06:35 I'm glad that you glad that you know that.

Speaker 1 01:06:37 No, and I do, it's just, it's really, it's difficult. And actually you'll like this Nike reached out to me to, um, lend my advice to a, a blog article that they were posting. And so I was like, okay. So I answered their questions and I'm cited in the article, which is pretty cool. But then they reached out to me and I'm gonna be on their podcast in, um, a couple of, of, I don't know, I think in November. And I'm like, what? They're like, yeah, well, we've had, we've had Michael B. Jordan and LeBron James, and we thought you'd be great on this. I'm like, I'm the third after those two, like, OK. OK. So

Speaker 3 01:07:16 There is cool stuff, a stirring.

Speaker 1 01:07:18 Right.

Speaker 3 01:07:22 Okay. Well,

Speaker 1 01:07:22 And even when it comes to, even when it comes to self care, like you, I think you, you kind of said, and I didn't, I was meant to go back to it, but you were talking about like, um, like people don't start taking care of themselves until like, we need to start younger. And like, I love when I see things for like younger generations, like mindfulness, Barbie, or breed with me Barbie, or like, it's like, it's cool. Like we're not teaching kids to breathe and to be mindful, no, we're teaching them go, go, go and restrict and be crazy. And so like, usually it's not until somebody's faced with a health issue or they're facing their own mortality. Cuz they're getting older that they then start to realize crap. Maybe I should be taking care of my

Speaker 3 01:08:02 Right. Okay. I'm gonna keep you in my brain. And I have to say something to you before we get off the phone, because this is a thing that I talk about every like a lot of times when I talk about mindfulness, I talk about your Seinfeld episode.

Speaker 1 01:08:16 My oh, what, watching Seinfeld during eating,

Speaker 3 01:08:20 Watching an episode of Seinfeld and then making a decision about having more food.

Speaker 1 01:08:26 Oh, <laugh>, you know, what's funny. We just recently redid a, a rewatch of Seinfeld and I was thinking of this this morning. I was like, I think the last time we watch it was when I was working with Anna. It,

Speaker 3 01:08:37 Well,

Speaker 1 01:08:37 I dunno. No, I don't think you watched it again in the middle. It would've been then probably,

Speaker 3 01:08:41 But you were watching it. And that was like the way that we've applied, mindful eating mm-hmm <affirmative> was like, okay, make what you want and then watch an episode. And if you still want food

Speaker 1 01:08:52 Right afterwards,

Speaker 3 01:08:54 Go have more food. Um, yeah. So I talk about, I

Speaker 1 01:08:59 That's so funny. I love that. I'm gonna now start using that as an example. <laugh> I forgot about that.

Speaker 3 01:09:05 It actually is your example. So you can cause you, we like, that was one that we did together. It's yours.

Speaker 1 01:09:11 That's so fun. No, I remember that. That was awesome. I remember very a almost everything you said <laugh>

-- ot and I hope you have all of the Tiffany's every

Speaker 1 01:09:23 So much. Tiffany's and I, I use hashtag pash fuck. posh AF that was you. You coined that for me. <laugh>

Speaker 3 01:09:29 Because you are because you are

Speaker 1 01:09:33 Oh,

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