

Episode 115

Say goodbye to the food police and hello to peace. Welcome to the Love, Food Podcast, hosted by dietitian and food behavior expert Julie Duffy Dillon. This authentically engineered series is in the form of a love letter welcoming you to reconnect with food. Now pour a cup of coffee, or a margarita, and let's begin.

Transition/Music overlay

Hi and welcome to episode 115 of the Love, Food podcast. I'm Julie Duffy Dillon, registered dietitian and partner on your food peace journey. I'm so glad you're here. Thank you for connecting today.

Are you new to the Love, Food podcast? If you are, well then welcome! I have been waiting for you to listen, so thanks for stopping by. If you're listening and you've been with me for a while, well we have been together for 115 episodes! That's a long time. And that's also *a lot* of self-awareness and doing analysis. I tell you what, that's really important, brave work, but it's exhausting. So many people on their food peace journey get to places where they just need to sit down and take a break, maybe even check out a little bit. And I hope you have compassion for yourself when you're in that space.

I have a letter from someone today who's in a place where food has had so much power connected to things in her childhood, things that were, um, neglected, basically, in her childhood and she's just tired of having to do all this work. Why can't she just eat normally? I hear that a lot from people. Have you ever asked for that? Have you ever said like, in desperation, "Why can't I just be a normal eater? You know, and just think about food when I'm supposed to and not all the time." Well (*laughs*), if you can relate to that statement, you will *really* relate to this letter.

Before we get to this episode's letter, a word from our sponsor.

This episode is brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. I'm so excited because enrollment is opening again and how you can know about when it's going to open up for enrollment? Well, you just go to my website, pcosandfoodpeace.com, you'll get put on the wait list, so you'll get *all* the details. But, here's a little bit. If you experience PCOS--it's polycystic ovarian syndrome for those of you who don't know what those letters mean—and you're trying to move away from diets, well I have been working for almost two decades now on figuring out a system that helps you to find health, experience health, and practice intuitive eating. And I have a twelve-step system that I've outlined into a course. So, you either work with me individually or you can use this course to do it on your own time. And everything is downloadable and a digital format and there's also a community um group that we formed on Facebook so there's a way to continue the dialogue as if you were in person. So, if you would like the details, all you need to do is go to pcosandfoodpeace.com. Another really cool nugget—if you're listening and you're a

health care provider, I know there are listeners who are dietitians and therapists and doctors, well I also have uh turned this course into kind of a way, kind of a template to also teach this system so if you're a healthcare provider and want to know more about helping people with PCOS make peace with food, you can also get to it by going to pcosandfoodpeace.com. If you enjoy this episode of the Love, Food podcast, I would love it, if I could talk (*laughs*), but also would love it if you could leave me a rating or review. And I know we podcasters are always saying it, but it makes a big difference so if you could leave a rating or review by clicking on the show notes, you'll see a little hyperlink right in the first paragraph to do so or you can scroll through on your podcatcher app for a way to do it but if you can leave a rating review, or share the episode, anything like that, any of those acts of kindness, it really helps the show grow and helps more people find it. Alright, enough of all that. Let's get to this episode's letter.

Transition/Music Overlay

Dear Food,

As part of the Baby Boomer generation, I grew up in the sixties, a time of counterculture and revolution. I shortened my skirt, carried placards and dieted. No matter what it said on the placard, you, Food, were my enemy.

You were never just food for me. In addition to a massive sweet tooth, I was always hungry for more food. My mother was a terrible cook and the least burnt food was allocated to males first. I was punished by being deprived of food. I learned to wolf down my food before my father could get angry at me and send me away from the table.

And the more you, Food, became the enemy the more important you became to me. Over the years, I have tried to disarm your power, but I really don't know how. Instead, I have rather rigorous eating habits and am super careful all the time. When I haven't done this, my weight has ballooned.

In my childhood diaries, I only write about you, for breakfast, lunch and dinner. I still plan my day around you.

I just want you to be food. I don't want you to be so complicated, with over and under layers. I don't want you to represent bad child memories of things I couldn't have. I just want to be present with you and let food be food. It's time for you to be disenfranchised. But I don't know how to do it.

Sincerely,

Not Wanting to Be Enemies

Transition

Hey there, letter writer. Thanks for the note. Food certainly has power. Food always had power over us as humans. It always will have power, and I believe it always should have power. Not

only does food nourish us and give us energy and all the nutrients we need in order to just stay alive, but it's an ultimate connector. I think about all the funerals and birthday parties I've been to in my life and food's a *really* important part. I think about all the times I've been in other cultures in my own neighborhood or my own country or around the world and food always has a place and a really important place. It is a connector and it helps us to define our culture and our family and community, so it's always going to have some power. I really was thinking about the time where you were coming into your own in the sixties, you know, I think about peace and love and body autonomy really was the theme, right? It's my body and I'm going to do what I want with it and *I* know what's best for me. Unfortunately, diet culture was *really* getting revved up at the same time. I think diet culture was born out of this seductive lie that *if* you follow the rules, well then you get everything you want. It's really f'd up, right? Because peace, love, and body autonomy does not really go with diet culture when we really get down to it. We just didn't know as much then. And, uh, you know, we're really coming along.

I identify as a Health At Every Size dietitian and that movement was started in the late sixties out of the reaction of, "Wow, people at higher weight really are mistreated." And it started with just a few people forming that community over that mistreatment and it's only grown from there, but before that, it wasn't on a collective radar, that I'm aware of, so it was this big lie that, again, if we just confir—conformed, rather to these rules, which again goes against all of what 1960s were about that I think about umm—and at the same, letter writer, thinking more about your own experiences growing up in your household where food was not something that was pleasurable—in the literal sense, it didn't taste good, it was often burnt, and it also wasn't pleasurable because of the, the environment around food. Mealtime sounds like a battlefield for you. You had to hurry up and get fed and don't make any noise, so you wouldn't get yelled at by your dad.

What I gathered from reading your note, was food was tense and it had to be really careful yet while it was tense and careful, you wanted more. And not in a gluttonous way, but in a meeting needs kind of way. You really wanted more. And I-I think that's why you were journaling about it. Your brain was just so fixated on it because as a child, we don't really appreciate that, hey, I'm not getting my needs met or I'm neglected right now. We just know survival, especially when we're really little and so for you, writing about food and all its little calories or uh flavors or whatever you were writing in that journal, was a way for your brain to keep you safe because it *knew* you weren't getting enough. You were getting neglected with food. I don't know if that's a word you use about your childhood, but there appears to be, from that short note, some neglect going on. So, what developed, was very natural to me. That food developed to have *too* much power, *too* much meaning, and I really get a sense from your letter that you're done with having to analyze this. You don't want to *peel* anymore layers. You want to be done with this. You're not a child anymore. You're not even like a-a teenager or a young adult. You are seasoned now and you want to move the hell away from this kind of drama. You just want to get it done.

What's really tricky about food *and* one of the coolest things, in my opinion, is that food is this amazing metaphor into this mirror image with something else. I feel like our relationship with food is a mirror image to how we're relating to something or someone in our life. It's basically announcing when we're looking for it and laying out a red carpet for an unmet need. And letter writer, you have so many unmet needs, especially around food. As a parent, one of our primary needs is to keep our children safe and part of keeping a child safe is giving that child enough food. And you didn't get that. You also weren't given food in a way that was safe and uh not very stressful. You know, as a parent, that's one of the things we can control is uh when kids get access to food, what food choices they have, and the environment that they get it in. We try really hard to do that as part of our job and you didn't get that. So, what has happened is kind of this shit show, right? Lots of unmet needs that have just continued to build up over the years. I know you don't want to do anymore work with it. I can appreciate the exhaustion for sure and I think food is representing some deeper, unresolved, unmet needs. Part of this place, that I know someone else listening can totally relate to because so many people have unmet needs, needs that they never got met, maybe they weren't neglected, but somehow just never were able to fulfill a need growing up and so they're experiencing that kind of same space where it feels confusing and fret and maybe then, this kind of overcompensation of being really careful and meticulous about food. One of the fears that comes with that experience is this fear that you're never going to meet your needs. That you shouldn't even try to meet your needs because there's no way in hell that it's going to happen. But, here's what I know. I know that you're needs don't go on forever and ever and ever and ever (*laughs*). Just like feelings, you'll be able to meet your needs. I, maybe a pie in the sky about this but I feel like you have everything you need within you to meet your needs and searching for that has lost of power.

So, I'm going to give you some advice that may sound like the opposite of what you're expecting. I wonder what it would be like to no longer fight food or fight the power, rather, that food is trying to take up in your life cause again, I feel like food is trying to tell you that, "Hey, you have this unmet need. Really, pay attention to it." And part of the unmet need does go back to, literally, food and your environment growing up. So, what if instead of fighting that, what if you did? What if you did give food more power? Instead of fighting it back and forth or trying to be careful with it, what if, instead, you gave yourself permission to write more about food? What if you gave yourself permission to take twice as long to eat? Or, spend more time at the grocery store, *really* looking. You don't have to buy it first, but really looking and considering, "What would I actually enjoy? Which of these foods would actually satisfy me?" And let yourself just look at them. Feel them. And, maybe, eventually, give yourself permission to bring a few of those home. And then when you give yourself permission to bring them home, giving yourself permission to sit in front of them, look at them, smell them, feel them, talk about them, and then, taste them. And notice how your body reacts to it.

I have a feeling that doing something the opposite of what you've been doing, may provide a different outcome. So, instead of fighting food, inviting the space it takes up in your brain, what if you really gave it the power that it's been yearning for? And I always say, if you listen to any of these podcast episodes before, that we give food too much power and part of what I see is the struggle for you, letter writer, is that there's constant push and pull, this like tug of war, and instead of continuing to tug on that rope, I'm picturing you dropping it and just walking over to Food and sit next to it and said, "Let's just hang out for awhile. Let's reconnect on a different level." And really—I just want you to uh like connect with Food in a way that gives you space to experiment. A wonderful tool to allow that is the *Intuitive Eating Workbook*. It's something that is on the Food Peace Syllabus. If you're new to the podcast, the Food Peace Syllabus is a collection of books, other podcasts, movies, blog posts, anything under the sun that we have deemed as helpful on our food peace journey. You can get to it by going to juliedillonrd.com. The Food Peace Syllabus has already included the *Intuitive Eating Workbook*, but I wanted to just put it on there again. I think it's something that could allow you to have kinda designated space where you are not tugging anymore and you are just trying to meet Food where it is and really connect with it and give yourself space to connect with it. So, I see Food has written back, letter writer. I appreciate your note and please stay in touch. I'm curious to know about the next steps. I'm curious to know which foods satisfy you and overtime, how that looks. It's not a really quick journey. You know, this food peace journey is life long and I have a feeling as you kind of lift up some new rocks, uncover what's been under there, it'll add some interesting layers. And I also think it's finally going to give you space to rest and not have to fight anymore.

This episode of a Love, Food podcast was brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. Enrollment is opening soon, so get to all the details by going to pcosandfoodpeace.com. If you enjoyed this episode of the Love, Food podcast, I would love it if you could leave a rating or review. You can get to that by clicking on the "show art right now," especially if you're in iTunes and you'll see a place to leave a rating or review by just scrolling down a little bit or you can click on the show notes under "subscribe here" or "leave a rating in seconds." And I appreciate in advance anything you do to help the show grow. It really helps other people find it. Alright, like I said, Food has written back so let's get to that, but until next time, take care.

Transition/Music Overlay

Dear Not Wanting to Be Enemies,

We know you're still mad about the role we have had in your life. Your childhood was not safe around us and that brings us sadness. We see you get annoyed whenever we come around. We're there because you have a well of unmet needs. You have yet to feel satisfied and yet to connect to the pleasure that warm community food brings. Let's make a truce and a pact. From now on, let's be open to what your body needs and appreciate that you have what it takes to meet those needs. Let's stop fighting and give you the space to direct the power where you want it to go.

Love,

Food

Transition/Music Overlay

Thank you for listening. I am Julie Duffy Dillon and this is the Love, Food podcast. Do you want access to more food peace? Jump on over to my website and join my-mail list. There, I share exclusive content that I don't share anywhere else. Get access to these tips and strategies by going to juliedillonrd.com/signup, and I look forward to seeing you here next week for another episode of the Love, Food podcast. Take care.