

## Episode 118 Transcription

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 118 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.

I have a question for you. How much power does food have in your life? Does it have too much power or too little power? I wonder because that power kind of tug of war—it has a big part of appreciating where you are on your food peace journey. I have a letter from someone today who's in a place that just feels so trapped and tired with her relationship with food and we're going to explore these questions. Before we get to that, I also want to say a special hello from you listener who have found me from the *Don't Salt My Game* podcast. It's a podcast hosted by Laura Thomas who's a dietitian out of London and so welcome to those of you who found me from talking to Laura about PCOS and also those of you from the *She's All Fat* podcast. I wasn't interviewed on it, but I was mentioned on it and so know many of you found me from that, which if you haven't heard the *She's All Fat* podcast, you *have* to listen to it right now. Like, it is such a great podcast. I'm so glad it's there to just be a part of the conversation of body liberation. It's a valuable resource for me and for many people I know. Anyway, welcome to new listeners and also those of you who have been around since day one. It's always nice to see you.

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

This episode of the Love, Food podcast is brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. This course is made for those of you affected by Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome and also looking for a way to treat it without dieting. I designed the course with the 12 steps that I take individual clients through that help you to promote health, make peace with food, and find ways to advocate for better care. It's all included in the course and enrollment is open now, so umm you can get to it at [pcosandfoodpeace.com](http://pcosandfoodpeace.com). If you enjoy this episode of the Love, Food podcast, I would appreciate a rating or review or subscribing or even sharing the episode. Those are the four things that you can do that help more people find the show and every time you do that, I really really appreciate it. I—like my favorite part of the day is when I see a new review with a comment on there, it like ma—brings me so much happiness so thank you to those of you who

have done that and anyone who's thinking about doing it, all you have to do is search for the Love, Food podcast on your Apple podcast app and you can just scroll down after you connect to the show and there will be a place for you to leave your stars that you want to put on there and any kind of comment so I appreciate in advance anything like that because again it helps more people find the show and *everyone* deserves to feel more at home in their skin they're in today. Alright, enough of all of that. Let's get to this episode's letter.

*Transition*

Dear Food,

I wish I could get you. I wish I could forget about you and not think so much about you all the time. You consume my every thought and I revolve my life around you. When I go for a walk to clear my head, I somehow head to the bakery instead. When I go get a cup of coffee, I always get you to accompany it. When I eat breakfast, I'm thinking about you for lunch and dinner. When I'm falling asleep at night, it's thoughts of you that occupies my mind. You are my end all and be all, you are what I look forward to each and everyday. Why can't I forget you? Why can't I stop thinking about you? Why are you so important to me?

Sure, we all need you to survive, but you're not a scarcity anymore, so why do I feel the need to constantly obsess about you? Why do you make me happy and also make me sad? You're like the worst lover and partner anyone can ask for, you don't give me peace, you don't make me content, you don't make me feel okay with myself. I want to break up with you, I want to forget about you, I want to live my life without having to do everything because of you. I feel trapped by you and I'm tired of you.

We are over.

Love,  
Entrapped and Tired

*Transition*

Hey letter writer. Before you say goodbye to Food forever and basically throwing your hands up and saying, "I guess it's always going to be this way," I want to just speak to some of my thoughts about what you could do next. First off, from reading your letter, I get the sense that two different things are happening, that kind of from the outside are going to look like totally conflicting each other and I appreciate that, but I still believe both is happening. What I mean is I get the sense, reading your note, that food has too much power *and* it also has too little power. And over the next few minutes, I want to describe for you what I mean by that, for you and for anyone listening who can totally appreciate your experience.

I think for so many people who are trying to recover who've been assaulted by culture and otherwise trying to live their life without dieting, can feel so draining and like a never-ending struggle, especially because of the feedback we get from the world we live in. And I do think that food has too much power. The way I kind of decide this opinion, is when someone says they're thinking about food all the time. It's interrupting them throughout the day and as soon as they finish one meal, they're thinking about the next time they can eat and thinking about it at night. Those are all things you note in your letter. And for anyone listening, I wonder if you can identify with that too. It's certainly a really common experience with people I talk to along their food peace journey. That food just has too much power.

I know that as humans, we are wired to survive and if we're not getting access to enough food, then our body is going to let us know by thinking about it and food behavior kind of research, they talk about it in a way as food preoccupation—that the threat of deprivation, not even deprivation but just the threat of it, is enough to send food preoccupation into overdrive to help remind yourself to do the things you need to do to stay alive. And, I think part of that is going on. A cool part of food behavior research is we have been able to find ways to rewire our brain to think about food in a calmer way. And it doesn't take avoidance or restriction because that's only going to make food preoccupation even more intense. And I think it's really important to honor the role of food preoccupation. It's literally helping you to be a successful human. It's keeping you alive. So, I don't want to mess with that. What I want to help train your brain to do is to think about food less often. And, when we live in a world where we are told that our body is not acceptable, when we're told there's only certain good or bad foods, there's lots of rules that start to build up that, in the end aren't really important to how our body needs to stay alive but yet they're in our brain. Our brain, if you can kind of picture roads and um highways, there's different paths going on and when we're brought up around a culture of we need to make sure we don't take up too much space and we need to eat correctly, or we are bad—you know those are all thoughts that end up having massive roads in our body—in our brain, rather and um they also get connected to certain feelings and experiences. For a lot of people I talk to, whenever a certain um situation happens or a certain feeling or an experience, because of overtime of the messages of diet culture, body hate, and dieting, having those experiences immediately leads to a thought about food. It's kind of this um fast track to helping to just soothe. Such an important skill. You know those are—those soothing skills were something that helped you for so long and for some people I talk to, they say well I just don't need them in that way anymore and for part of your letter, I was connecting to that. You know, maybe part of your brain's wiring is a result of being brought up in diet culture and with dichotomous kind of food rules. And they don't suit you anymore. They're not something you want to live your life with anymore. And, I have a blog post that I wrote um a while ago that may be helpful so I'm going to put it on the food peace syllabus. And, if you're new to the Love, Food podcast, the food peace syllabus is a list of blog posts and other podcasts, movies, books, anything under the sun that we have found along our food peace journey to further help cultivate a positive relationship with food and body. And you can get the most recent updated food peace syllabus by going to [juliedillonrd.com](http://juliedillonrd.com). I'm going to put the blogpost [juliedillonrd.com/scaryhunger](http://juliedillonrd.com/scaryhunger).

And with doing the—the umm, it's kind of like a worksheet or kind of a how to, how to start rewiring your brain and when a person is in a place where they're getting enough food, that there's not scarcity going on and they're wanting to rewire their brain to not always be thinking about food, something that always needs to be happening is unconditional permission to eat. And I'm going to talk a little bit more about that in a moment. So, we need to assume that as you're reading this blog post that you're either working towards that or closer to it. And, along with it, there's a way in that blog post to help your brain start to have less space connected to food. And, we have rhythms in our body for so many things like sleep and um I remember having experiences growing up where summer I could stay up late and sleep in and then when school would get back in session, the first week I would be exhausted because it was hard to fall asleep earlier and then wake up earlier, so I was still staying up late but then tired in the morning. But, after about a week, my circadian rhythms for sleep adjusted and I naturally got tired earlier and able to wake up earlier as well. And we can do the same thing with the patterns the brain has about food thoughts and body thoughts. I mean, you can go really far into this and again, there always needs to be unconditional permission to eat when a person is doing this exercise, or it will backfire. It won't work and um it becomes diety basically and so check that out. It's at [juliedillonrd.com/symbolichunger](http://juliedillonrd.com/symbolichunger). There's also a link in the show notes for you so don't have to worry about writing that down now.

But, I alluded to that unconditional permission to eat and I'm going to get back to it. And I want to get back to it now because besides having this experience, letter writer, where food has too much power, I do also believe that food has too little power in your life and I may be talking out of both sides of my mouth, but I actually don't think that I am. I think it's just different concepts happening at the same time and they appear like a dichotomy but when it gets down to it, I don't think it is.

So, what I mean by food having too little power is you mentioned that you're not experiencing scarcity anymore which is really important. I wonder, what does scarcity mean? Scarcity for so many people means like I'm eating enough which for some people means the bare minimum and sometimes we're eating enough food literally and maybe just even like enough to not be um going brain dead yet it's not really enough for pleasure. It's not enough variety and there's not unconditional permission to eat those foods. So, if we don't have unconditional permission to eat, which means basically you have permission through and through to eat whatever the hell you want, whenever you want, with whomever you want (*laughs*). And honestly, unconditional permission to eat is kind of like on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs like self-actualization. It's really really hard to get to and it's not because of a character flaw that you or I have—it's just because we live in a world that doesn't give us unconditional permission to eat, so we gotta get through a whole hell of a lot of bullshit and appreciate how our body does not need to be fixed—it's the world that needs to be fixed, and so more that we can practice that, the more we can do unconditional permission to eat. And, I don't get the sense from reading your letter, that there's that part of it and it's probably a nuance and I'm probably reading between the lines a little bit but when I talk to someone on their food peace journey, that "I'm definitely eating enough, it's not scarcity, yet why—why does this keep happening?," and when we dig deeper, oftentimes

what's happening is every time a certain food is chosen, on the outside it may look like permission, but underneath that it's like, "Ugh, again? Am I hungry again? Do I want this again? Why do I have to always eat?" There's this like hidden kind of chip in a way, kind of a food behavior microaggression I guess that just keeps belittling you and for you, letter writer, I just wonder if that's happening. I wonder if it hasn't gotten to the point where you have true unconditional permission to eat. And not only is that important to help with your relationship with food, I think unconditional permission to eat is important as a human because food is the greatest connector. Food is something that unites us when we're with other people, when we're visiting different cultures and different types of people. Food is something that connects us to so many things and food also connects us to ourselves. And I wish you were sitting in front of me right now, letter writer because when I read your letter, I wondered what it would be like if instead of addressing this to Food, could you have substituted yourself? All those things you said about Food being like the "worst lover and partner, you don't give me peace, you don't make me happy, I'm just not ok with you," I wonder if you were thinking that about yourself?

Our relationship with food is a great window into how we relate to our self. And, if this is how you're speaking to Food, I just wonder if that's how you're talking to yourself. So, if you're wondering how to make amends, or how to exist—to coexist with Food, I have a feeling it has to be really finding a way to coexist with yourself. To find a way to reconnect within and to be at peace with everything you bring. The cool, awesome stuff and the really shitty stuff too. Be okay with all of it. And that's really for everyone. For all of us listening. That's our greatest work, right? We all need to do that with ourselves in order to feel at peace. And, for you letter writer, and for anyone who can identify with this letter, the missing part of the puzzle is to really examine what's your relationship like with yourself?

So, letter writer, I see Food has written back. So, I need to get going but please stay in touch. Again, I feel like I'm leaving it with more questions, but also, I hope it gives you some next steps along your food peace journey.

This episode of the Love, Food podcast was brought to you by my PCOS and Food Peace course. Enrollment is happening right now, and you can get to it at [pcosandfoodpeace.com](http://pcosandfoodpeace.com). If you enjoyed this episode, I would love it if you could leave a rating or review, subscribe, or share the episode. Doing any of those acts of kindness really helps the show grow and helps more people find it. Alright, enough of all of that. Let's get to Food's letter. And until next time, take care.

*Transition/Music Overlay*

Dear Entrapped and Tired,

We see how frustrated you are with us. We've never seemed to be convenient and we always are too much. We see your exhaustion. There is another way, but we, Food, don't think we can change it. We think spending more time with permission and compassion will place you at ease.

Further, consider ways to reconnect behaviors to make them less scary. We need to find a way to walk together because connecting to joy and peace happen more often when we are united.

Love, Food

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](http://juliedillonrd.com/signup), and I look forward to seeing you here next week for another episode of the Love, Food podcast. Take care.