

S1E2: Unpacking Diet Culture: gender, health, and dieting's impact on society

[00:00:00] **Hilary:** Well, hello and welcome to the body trust podcast. This is Hilary. And I'm sitting here with my wonderful cohost, Dana and serious. Y'all want to say hi.

[00:00:12] **Sirius:** Hi. Hey, everybody.

[00:00:15] **Hilary:** Welcome. Welcome. We're so glad you're here and maybe back for our second episode. And we are talking about diet culture today, which feels like something we're all You know, always talking about, but it's hard to do this work without mentioning a lot.

[00:00:32] **Hilary:** And we want you to know what we mean.

[00:00:35] **Dana:** I think one of the things we want to do today is is talk about how people develop an analysis of what diet culture is and how, you know, how ways we might still be rooted. in diet culture. A lot of people don't think they're dieting. They don't think they restrict. They don't think they have a dieting mindset.

[00:00:59] **Dana:** And yet when you grow up in a culture that is so preoccupied with perfecting food and eating and bodies and health we have to know what it looks like, what it sounds like, what it feels like, because diet culture is shapeshifty. And so I think one of the purposes of this podcast is to make sure that listeners have a sense of how it shows up in their life and how it's impacted them and the decisions they make on a day to day basis and how they view the world.

[00:01:29] **Hilary:** And who's selling it, you know, it's a lot of people these days, they're selling the, this isn't a diet. It's a lifestyle.

[00:01:39] **Sirius:** It's about health and wellness.

[00:01:43] **Sirius:** You know, when I think about diet culture, one of the pieces that's really helpful for me to remember is that diet culture is culture. It is. It is language, it is patterns, it's ways of behaving and thinking and communicating with people especially in an American context for women in particular, folks who are socialized as women and folks who are navigating the world of women, diet culture does become a way of talking to each other.

[00:02:21] **Sirius:** You can connect with people very easily about what diet are you on, or I can't have this, or what are you trying out this month? And I think that's a really interesting thing to observe as you watch other people relate to each other, to what extent that easy, quick hand of diet culture becomes a very easy way of relating.

[00:02:44] **Sirius:** And what are the implications of that to have very easy ways of relating rooted in oppressive systems?

[00:02:51] **Sirius:** Yeah.

[00:02:51] **Dana:** And have that be somehow invisibilized by the culture, that it's so normative and it's just in the air that we breathe [00:03:00] that we don't even think to question it or even see that's what we're doing.

[00:03:04] **Dana:** And I, I remember people, a lot of times when people, especially in our certification program experience equitable community or being in community where everyone is. is working towards liberation then they go home and they are like, or they go out into the world and then it's everywhere and they start to see it in places they wouldn't see it before because they were so protected from it.

[00:03:33] **Dana:** And in an environment that we cultivate and body trust work.

[00:03:38] **Hilary:** There's assumptions made. And I think that's a big piece of diet culture is that, you know, as Sirius is saying, it's you don't even need words to communicate some of this because there's an automatic assumption that we all think, you know, fat is bad. And weight loss is good. And that we can talk to anyone about it.

[00:03:58] **Dana:** Right. And that it's somehow true. When I think of culture, I think about beliefs that we have, these beliefs that we don't even think to question. And some of that is true because our socialization around bodies and body hierarchies starts when we're so young. And so by the time we get to our education we're just like, yeah, this is true.

[00:04:22] **Dana:** Yeah. And we don't even think to question what we've been taught. And of course as. you know, as I said earlier, many people don't think they're dieting. They just believe they're watching what they're eating in air quotes or trying to be healthy in air quotes. And that's because diet culture has shapeshifted over time.

[00:04:45] **Dana:** And so maybe talking a little bit about what have we seen, how has it shifted over time? What did it used to look like? What does it look like today with GLP 1 medications? I think Sirius was going to share some. Insights into the evolution,

[00:05:06] **Sirius:** You know, I, there, I think a lot of ways that I might enter this conversation, but we're recording right now during the context of the Democratic National Convention, and at the time that we're recording this just last night, Bill Clinton spoke during the convention.

[00:05:24] **Sirius:** And I happened to be in the hair shop with a bunch of other Black women of varying age ranges, so, from like a 7 year old to, I think there was a woman who was in her 70s there yesterday. And the way that folks were talking about Bill Clinton was very interesting, and of course Monica Lewinsky came up and all of that and what happened there.

[00:05:47] **Sirius:** And I had to remind folks that, Part of how we even got the story of Monica Lewinsky and the, what happened with the impeachment was [00:06:00] diet culture. Monica Lewinsky became very close friends with Paula because they wanted to share dieting tips. If that relationship hadn't happened, we wouldn't know anything about Monica.

[00:06:13] **Sirius:** We wouldn't know anything about that blue dress or that cigar or have an impeachment hearing. All of those things might never have surfaced. We wouldn't know anything. If it wasn't

[00:06:23] **Hilary:** for diet culture. And there was fat shaming of Monica too. Absolutely. Right. She was considered. Oh, why did he

[00:06:32] **Sirius:** choose the pudgy one?

[00:06:33] **Sirius:** Mm hmm. Lots of questions about her and her body size. And I think like it's kind of an interesting moment in time because It's this moment of these two women who were very concerned about their weight and their size, who bonded over that. But I think this piece around Monica Lewinsky and the fat shaming is also interesting because of the ways in which women and women's bodies in the 90s and young women's bodies in particular were shamed.

[00:07:05] **Sirius:** And there's a bit of a reckoning around some of that right now that we're seeing people looking at, you know, pictures of Jessica Simpson and Britney Spears when they were fat shamed and blasted over tabloids and

Tyra Banks has cellulite and those sorts of things. And the way it's like, those women looked very normal, if not thin.

[00:07:26] **Sirius:** At the time and today, and I think it's very interesting to think like sort of what was showing up particularly the 90s around that and how it's different or not different now.

[00:07:38] **Dana:** It just so connects around that, like the, what we were saying when we started recording around the connection fostered through diet culture. So and then, yeah, I'm just really taken aback by that.

[00:07:56] **Hilary:** I mean, I think the dieting industry has long tried to link you know, like women's liberation and dieting together, right? That's a threat of liberation and I heard. A long time ago that, you know, dieting particularly really picked up after rope versus way trying to ride this idea that women have, you know, can make the whatever choice they want and do whatever they want their bodies.

[00:08:26] **Sirius:** Yeah, there, there is this interesting thing that happens where, as their movements towards.

[00:08:35] **Sirius:** Whether you want to call it gender equity, equality, or justice, or you just want to call it rights for women. Yeah, it's complicated. But as there are strides for let's just say the feminist movement, there are often counter strides against women's bodies.

[00:08:54] **Speaker 4:** And

[00:08:54] **Sirius:** often that shows up as the right. The the freedom of choice to diet, [00:09:00] the opportunities to make your body smaller because your voice or your ideas have gotten too big.

[00:09:07] **Sirius:** And not only is an opportunity, but it's something that you have to do.

[00:09:12] **Dana:** Yeah, well, and as you were bringing up the Clintons, I think it was. In the 90s, where women finally were allowed not to wear hosiery in Congress, like the few women that were serving were required to wear skirts and hope like pantyhose until and then in the 90s that shifted to where they could wear pantsuits.

[00:09:43] **Dana:** Hilary's gonna throw a pen.

[00:09:47] **Hilary:** Um,

[00:09:47] **Hilary:** I remember my mom talking about that when she worked in corporate America in the 80s and 90s and how she was downplaying, you know, their fight for liberation at that time for a lot of reasons, good ones. And also because she was like, we were just trying not to wear skirts.

[00:10:05] **Hilary:** It's well, yeah.

[00:10:09] **Dana:** It also has me thinking about how as more people have, especially the diet industry, the weight loss industry has really targeted people assigned female at birth and as more as movements like health at every size and fat acceptance and countercultural ways of thinking about how we navigate food in our bodies have gotten more attention because largely probably because of social media, diet industry has suffered.

[00:10:43] **Dana:** And they've seen men as an untapped market. And so one of the ways that it has shifted over time is, you know, now we see, you know, teenage boys being obsessed with six pack abs and wanting their protein drinks and wanting home gyms and being really obsessed with fitness. And an aesthetic of health paid.

[00:11:12] **Dana:** That maybe they don't make it so much about their size. Although I would argue that fat kids would say it's about size. It's just been so co opted and repackaged and resold. And now it's even being and like men are really buying into it.

[00:11:29] **Sirius:** I don't think it's coincidental that at the same time those things are happening, we also see an emergence in the mainstream of gay men's culture, and the ways in which fitness and certain types of bodies are pried within that context also has an impact on the world of men, and who is seen as attractive and who is not.

[00:11:51] **Sirius:** And a lot of that has to do with the male gaze on other men. Yes. So, and I think that's just a really [00:12:00] interesting thing. And some of that's like sexual neurotic and some of that's not, right. It's a mix of both, but it is interesting to see that sort of men have to now shift also and be a party to some of this, you know, very difficult and uncomfortable conversations around what we're eating or not, how much you're exercising or not, and what our bodies look like or not.

[00:12:24] Yes, and divesting from that gaze. The male gaze, even within trans and non binary communities. And what we see as androgynous bodies and these standards of beauty that white supremacist culture, I mean, diet culture is white supremacist culture. And that is a part where people can get hooked in body sculpting and whose ideas of the right kind of body are we upholding?

[00:12:54] **Hilary:** Yeah. Yeah, but it was a way to separate from separate white folks from black folks, especially when slavery was in its later years. That's, you know, I mean, our biggest teacher in that has been Sabrina Strings. She wrote *Fearing the Black Body*, but I think a lot of folks don't know how to put that together, don't know how to bridge the connection between.

[00:13:20] **Hilary:** You know, white supremacy and racism and diet culture, you know, and I think if we can build that bridge a little more strongly. the harm becomes a little more evident.

[00:13:33] **Sirius:** Yeah, I mean, I think it's an interesting point because Sabrina Strings really does give us that like historical grounding. But it's also like a very contemporary thing.

[00:13:45] **Sirius:** There are ways in which diet culture is very much coded as white culture. There are ways in which there's a class dynamic to diet culture as well. It is harder to participate in diet culture in a quote unquote productive way if you do not have a certain level of means or wealth and if you don't have that and you make choices that are sort of counter to diet culture one of the consequences is that you might be deemed poor or inadequate or something like that.

[00:14:13] **Sirius:** And so I think it's interesting because there, there's a really like obvious historical piece to this, but it's also sort of like living and breathing and morphing in its own very exciting and difficult, racist, classist, and sexist way, you know, right now as we live and breathe.

[00:14:34] **Hilary:** We're all socialized into this in one layer.

[00:14:38] **Dana:** And I think, you know, I think it was in the nineties or. Yeah. I feel like it was in the nineties where there was more emphasis on the O epidemic. We don't use the O words in this podcast, but when we started to talk about an epidemic of fatness is when it became about [00:15:00] health, right? They started, you know, health became code for weight or weight became code for health.

[00:15:08] **Dana:** And then people were dieting. You know, some people will say, I've I, you know, I'm not trying to lose weight. I'm just trying to be healthy. And so it, diet culture is shapeshifted to that where people cannot divorce weight from health. That we believe we can look at someone and know if they're healthy and now health has just become a substitute a way of talking about, say it again.

[00:15:37] **Hilary:** Like a stand in.

[00:15:38] **Dana:** Yeah. A stand in. Yep.

[00:15:42] **Hilary:** There's no evidence that any of this dieting is making people healthier.

[00:15:48] **Sirius:** I mean, there's evidence to the contrary,

[00:15:51] **Hilary:** right? Yeah.

[00:15:53] **Sirius:** Right. You know, I think that's the piece that people don't want to acknowledge or understand or investigate further the messages around fat being unhealthy is so deeply embedded in our cultural consciousness that the counter argument that the sort of scientific evidence based counter argument holds no water with anyone.

[00:16:17] **Sirius:** It is very difficult for people to accept that might even be true. Let alone that it, you know, is, but just the idea of it is just, it's hard for people to really grasp or hang on to,

[00:16:32] **Hilary:** and yet people are very comfortable taking medical advice for nutrition advice from some random person on their, for you page on TikTok.

[00:16:42] **Hilary:** Right. I mean, we can all watch that happen in ourselves. We're honest about it.

[00:16:49] **Sirius:** If it'll get me smaller, it's a risk worth taking. Right. Right. I've been so indoctrinated to believe that big is bad, that even if this thing that'll make me smaller is questionable, it might, you know, Give me diarrhea or whatever, or, you know, have some sort of long term health impact.

[00:17:12] **Sirius:** If it makes me smaller, it's probably better because also I've been told that the long term impact of me being big will be catastrophic. So, you

know, Gastroparesis. Well, that's minor in comparison to dying because of being fat. So risk worth taking.

[00:17:33] **Hilary:** Risk worth taking. And hey, if it helps you eat less, not completely sarcastically, because we do believe in eating here and that eating regularly is part of health,

[00:17:45] **Dana:** well, and I can't help but think about the connection to eating disorders.

[00:17:49] **Hilary:** Yeah.

[00:17:50] **Dana:** And how, you know, when we mess with people's food, we're really putting them at risk. Eating disorders are life [00:18:00] threatening conditions. And when I've been out. Like I used to travel for work a fair amount and would be out for dinner by myself. And if someone talked, started talking to me occasionally, if they asked me what I did for a living, I would tell them the truth.

[00:18:17] **Dana:** I learned pretty quickly to say that I was a florist because nobody fucking got it.

[00:18:24] **Dana:** But when I said I worked with eating disorders, you know, and it really varied what I would say, sometimes I would say I was a dietician, sometimes I would say I worked with eating disorders. But inevitably, if I said something about eating disorders, someone would say, Oh, I could use a little bit of that.

[00:18:41] **Dana:** I could use a little bit of an eating disorder.

[00:18:44] **Sirius:** Wow.

[00:18:47] **Dana:** No, my patients are suffering. This is not, but that's how we pedestal people with eating disorders. And God forbid if Pro suffering. Yes,

[00:18:59] **Sirius:** it absolutely is. Diet

[00:19:02] **Dana:** culture is pro suffering. Until. Yeah. Sometimes I would say, if someone asked me, Oh, what's the work you do?

[00:19:15] **Dana:** I help people heal their relationship with food and their bodies. The next sentence out of their mouth is, Oh, yeah, I'm doing the keto diet. I'm feeling great. What the fuck did I just say? That makes you think that the keto diet is good. is something to bring up right now. It's a diet.

[00:19:36] **Dana:** Like what the fuck did I say about healing your relationship with food and body that makes you think that keto is the next thing to talk about? That's how steeped in diet culture we are that people don't even see it.

[00:19:51] **Sirius:** Yeah, because it's not what you said. It's their filter for what you said their filter for what you said is very much that the unhealed relationship is clearly about eating too much and being fat.

[00:20:06] **Sirius:** And so if your work is to heal that, then your job is to really rein it in because those people are doing too much.

[00:20:14] **Dana:** Maybe next time if someone asks me I'll say. I'll put on the end of it, not to perfect food and eating, but to have a better relationship with food. I think I'll stick to florist. Go ahead,

[00:20:26] **Hilary:** Hilary.

[00:20:26] **Hilary:** You know, as the therapist here, I don't think people understand relationship with food as a thing. You know, dieting and disordered eating impacts your access to hunger signals and Your relationship with yourself, your sense of well being could contribute to depression and anxiety. We don't put that together.

[00:20:50] **Hilary:** We don't think that this act of trying to change ourselves over and over again is actually having an impact on us. And it is having an impact on us. And it's not [00:21:00] because it didn't work because they don't work. It's because. You've been made to believe that it's your fault over and over again.

[00:21:11] **Hilary:** And your body's your fault and all that stuff. And it is not anyone. It's not any individual's fault, but that is the fault of this. You know, failed paradigm, this failed weight, normative weight focused paradigm that lets people, you know, hate themselves over and over again for profit and is willing to bet on return customers to their programs and calling that good instead of calling it harm.

[00:21:53] **Dana:** Calling it dedication. Yeah.

[00:21:55] **Hilary:** Yeah.

[00:21:55] **Speaker 2:** And,

[00:21:56] **Dana:** yeah.

[00:21:59] **Dana:** And we see with the increase. number of people that are choosing to divest from diet culture and choosing to a different path, right? That a lot of these industries want to straddle, they want to take our language and they want to use diet talk about diet culture. They said, we're going to end the diet culture.

[00:22:27] **Dana:** The current diet culture is what Oprah said. We're going to move. We're going to end this current diet culture. And I thought, yeah, so you can usher in a new one like, and that is, you know, as they as we gain grounds and people aren't, you know, Weight Watchers lost money. For a few years. But now with the GLP ones, they're coming back.

[00:22:52] **Sirius:** Your point is an excellent one that the co option of the language in the movement, right? This is diet culture cloaked in acceptance, in liberation, in anti racist thinking, in In loving your body, right? This is, that's what they're selling us now.

[00:23:15] **Sirius:** It is a wolf in sheep's clothing because it is the same harmful, problematic, detrimental, unsafe behavior and ways of thinking about food and movement, but it's absolutely draped in this it's new. It's liberated. Right? They've stolen the language from us as a way to continue selling us the same nonsense.

[00:23:41] **Dana:** Yeah. Even talking about food noise, I'm like, yeah, you know what else decreases food noise? Getting enough to eat. Not magical. If your brain is preoccupied with food and eating, it's probably 99 percent chance that it's because you don't get enough to eat throughout the day [00:24:00] consistently.

[00:24:01] **Dana:** And sometimes that's not your fault. Sometimes people have food insecurity, they don't have access to food. But when we get access to food regularly and we get enough to eat, that decreases food noise. But they're talking about food noise, like this medication is going to be the next big thing.

[00:24:18] **Hilary:** Well, it's the food noise of hunger, like you're talking about.

[00:24:21] **Hilary:** It's also the food noise of living in a diet culture over and over again and accumulating rules and ideas about what's right to eat and what's wrong to eat and what time you're supposed to stop eating, you know, and they all pile on top of each other. So there's a certainty that you're doing it wrong all the time.

[00:24:40] **Hilary:** And I think that's also

[00:24:41] **Hilary:** the food noise of restriction. Yeah. So when people get on a JLP one and they're Not as hungry because that's the effect of the medication is to, you know, keep people from eating. Then they think the food noise is gone because they feel like they've solved the problem or the solution's coming.

[00:25:04] **Hilary:** This is the magic pill we've been promised forever. It is not.

[00:25:08] **Dana:** Yeah,

[00:25:09] **Hilary:** it

[00:25:10] **Sirius:** is

[00:25:10] **Hilary:** not.

[00:25:12] **Dana:** Well, and I'm so curious are these people watching the food network?

[00:25:17] **Hilary:** I know,

[00:25:17] **Dana:** because we know that You know, people after bariatric surgery lose the food noise too. They didn't coin it that way. way, but their bodies get really quiet and they don't experience hunger like they did.

[00:25:31] **Dana:** And yet their bodies are hungry because they're not getting enough. And so what they find is they're watching the food network and they're obsessively looking at cookbooks and they're not consuming the food because in some ways that desire to eat has been diminished by the surgery, especially in the first couple of months.

[00:25:50] **Dana:** Usually that does not last beyond six months. But it makes me wonder if people on, I've not heard anything about that, but if people on GLP ones are preoccupied with the food network,

[00:26:04] **Sirius:** listen, do I think it is a coincidence, the rise of GLP ones and its connection to TikTok at the same time as the rise of cooking TikTok at the same time, the rise of the tread wife who one of her main like things that she does in the day is cook food.

[00:26:24] **Sirius:** I think those things are very tightly linked. Yeah, I think those things are very connected. I think that our interest in food and, you know, cooking food and, I mean, there was, do you remember, I don't know, this is happening a few months back, the guy who was making those really sexy cooking videos, like, where it was like borderline what am I watching here?

[00:26:46] **Sirius:** What is this? Or, and there's a, there's actually a lot of cooking videos that are actual, like they're, you know, they're on, they're OnlyFans content, but they. If we don't know that's what it is, then we don't know that's [00:27:00] what it is. But I think that those kind of things, they tend to, I'm not surprised that these things are happening at the same time.

[00:27:08] **Sirius:** It makes a lot of sense to me that these things are happening at the same time.

[00:27:12] **Dana:** Yeah, and it speaks to the shape shifting nature of it. This is where it's shifting? Whoa.

[00:27:19] **Hilary:** Yeah. It's wild. I mean, this industry is enormous. You know, we used to be talking about diet books, but now we're talking about every fucking thing.

[00:27:29] **Sirius:** Diet influencers, diet programs, diet, I mean, it's,

[00:27:37] **Sirius:** you can buy a course. People are putting together courses. .
Oh

[00:27:43] **Dana:** my gosh. Yeah. I was it was interesting knowing we're recording this. Reagan Chastain sends out a weight and healthcare newsletter and just yesterday was like, what? What includes the diet industry, the weight loss industry? That's, that was the question.

[00:28:01] **Dana:** The weight loss industry and what I wanted to share some of that here. It was in 2023. It was a \$90 billion industry. And this is what it included. So it didn't include social media influencers, Sirius, and like diet TikTok. It included weight loss meds, medical weight loss programs and

services, and that includes independent physicians like bariatricians clinics, hospitals, and medical weight loss franchises.

[00:28:36] **Dana:** Then it also included commercial weight loss chains, meal replacements, and retail appetite suppressants. That was what made up the 90 billion industry. So we don't have social media influencers and all the money they're making. With their nonsense, fitness pros, you know, I appreciated Reagan Chastain's definition of the weight loss industry, which is if someone makes money selling or supporting weight loss, they are part of the weight loss industry. Said another way. If a change to a weight neutral healthcare paradigm in which the focus shifted from weight loss to supporting the health of higher weight people directly would have a negative impact on someone's career or their earnings and render their work moot.

[00:29:31] **Dana:** They are part of the weight loss industry.

[00:29:35] **Sirius:** Yeah.

[00:29:36] **Dana:** So this doesn't even include researchers like academia is not on the investigators.

[00:29:43] **Hilary:** Yeah. Culture and all its forms.

[00:29:47] **Dana:** It's well above a 90 billion industry today.

[00:29:51] **Hilary:** Yeah, it really is. It is. I mean, which speaks to the importance to this place, [00:30:00] this economy. I mean, it's medical system too. I think we don't name that enough that it's not just because your doctor says you should lose weight or go on a diet. Does that mean that's possible?

[00:30:10] **Hilary:** You know, they have the same evidence base. They don't have any magic. Saying it in their medical office doesn't make it different, you know, so, and that's to me, that looks like medicine outsourcing itself, you know, to the diet industry over and over again. There's money to be made. Yeah.

[00:30:32] **Dana:** And doctors and nurses and people with that work within have been socialized to think about bodies in this way.

[00:30:41] **Dana:** And I said it earlier and I'll say it again and then they get to their medical training and they don't even think to question the biased research. And if we added research, weight loss research to this money number, 90

billion, I don't know what it would raise a hundred million at least, probably a hundred billion.

[00:31:05] **Dana:** If we include, because so many ways grants get funded. within healthcare is to attach weight loss to them. So they don't have a weight loss goal within the study, but if they put a weight thing in the proposal, they're more likely to get their grant funded because it's around the O word.

[00:31:27] **Sirius:** That reminds me of some of the shifts that we've seen in diet culture, the sort of demonization of certain foods over time, and which foods are sort of on the no list at any given time. There was a skit once about someone who comes back in time from the future and like visits this person as they're eating breakfast and they're like, don't eat the eggs.

[00:31:48] **Sirius:** It's going to kill all of us. And then he comes back two minutes later. He's actually, it wasn't the eggs. It was the cereals, the sugar in the cereal. He comes back two minutes later. Okay. Okay. The milk, you can't have the milk. It just every few years, the thing that we're not supposed to be eating, the thing that is making us unhealthy and sick and o whichever o you're dealing with.

[00:32:11] **Sirius:** I think that's very interesting and that ties also directly back to the research conversation. And who's making money today on which food, on which crop is being subsidized at this time, which food is sort of making its way into the sort of, you know, the American mainstream diet at this moment, and not just the American mainstream diet, you know.

[00:32:34] **Sirius:** Yeah, I think it's very interesting to think about the ways in which food is also placed right under the bus and just fine foods just. We really, I mean, really gonna judge a food that is nourishing as being the worst possible thing you can eat?

[00:32:53] **Hilary:** Unnecessary, like sugar. You know, I was thinking when you said sugar, how many people are [00:33:00] playing in their emails to us right now about the dangers of sugar.

[00:33:03] **Hilary:** And I just wanted to say, they can save them because we've heard it all already.

[00:33:08] **Dana:** I saw a dietitian on Instagram posting that beans are the latest superfood. They've been declared by some white man to be the latest superfood. And so she was like, The price of beans is going to skyrocket now because this

white man said this. So stock up because they're, you know, we know that about so many superfoods once they get deemed and then the people, whose culture they're from don't get to access them because they can't afford them anymore.

[00:33:45] **Sirius:** So at the same time, I literally saw a TikTok the other day of news footage from the 90s demonizing in particular Mexican food and beans because of how fatty and carbohydrate heavy they are. Right. At least, I mean, it's this, it's the cycle. It's the churn. It's,

[00:34:04] **Dana:** yeah.

[00:34:05] **Sirius:** Yeah. Yep.

[00:34:05] **Dana:** Yep. It's making me think about how, when I used to do more clinical work, people would come in to see me.

[00:34:13] **Dana:** And well, it's making me think of a couple of things. One is like, when I asked people, what are your favorite foods? It was often the hardest one. thing on my intake form because they weren't sure if they were going to be judged. They sometimes they were surprised by some of the things they liked that, oh, there's a fruit on here, right?

[00:34:30] **Dana:** So there's that aspect of it. And when people come in with such challenging relationships with food, it's in part because their head is going in circles because all of this information conflicts with itself. So it's do I do low carb? Do I do low protein? Do I do high protein? What about fat? Is fat good?

[00:34:50] **Dana:** Is fat bad? And I remember my mom called me once, I just saw on Good Morning America that fiber is bad for me. I thought fiber was good for me, you know, and so people's heads are spinning. And, they would come in and I'm like, the last thing you need is somebody telling you what to eat and what's right and what's wrong, because that clearly has not been helpful.

[00:35:13] **Dana:** So my first session was usually like, I want you to go home and notice. Do you like what you're eating? Because when I would ask people, do you like what you're eating? They couldn't tell me. That's diet culture for you right there. You don't even know if you like what you're eating.

[00:35:31] **Hilary:** So we dial it way about to like what they're eating,

[00:35:34] **Dana:** right? Yep.

[00:35:36] **Speaker 4:** Diet

[00:35:37] **Dana:** culture is suffering. Yep.

[00:35:42] **Hilary:** We need a t shirt. So fun.

[00:35:47] **Dana:** So body trust really offers people It's countercultural work, right? Body trust is countercultural work where we're trying to sniff this out and [00:36:00] see the places where we're still vested. Because I think, you know, when I think about the researchers I used to work with,

[00:36:09] **Dana:** they didn't think they were promoting dieting behaviors, right? They thought they were promoting healthy lifestyles. And so with body trust work, we have to lay down all of that shit so that something that resonates born deeply within us can be accessed.

[00:36:30] **Sirius:** Reflecting on this conversation and some of the things we brought up in a fat body is

[00:36:39] **Sirius:** really challenging and hard. And as someone who has these conversations regularly, often, and engaging with others, teaching about it, right, to sort of still have those feelings come up the shame, the resentment. That, that quote from Reagan about if a person's livelihood would be diminished or invisible, if they basically had to validate my existence and how many people are depending on totally invalidating me to make a living, that's wild.

[00:37:23] **Sirius:** That's wild.

[00:37:24] **Dana:** Yeah. It's

[00:37:25] **Hilary:** truly wild.

[00:37:28] **Dana:** And painful.

[00:37:29] **Hilary:** Yes. It is. Yes, you're doing something right now that doesn't get done in these conversations very much, which is highlighting that these conversations don't impact all of us the same, right, folks are going to be more impacted by this likely. Because of what's done to them on a day to day basis what they live and experience on a day to day basis.

[00:37:57] **Hilary:** And, you know, we have a kind, you know, we have a culture that talks about fat people all the time and expects them to agree. All the time. Yes, we expect them to be complicit in their own abuse. Absolutely.

[00:38:12] **Sirius:** And it like I have, you know, I have a couple of other intersecting oppressed identities. And for the most part, my, my race, my gender.

[00:38:22] **Sirius:** My my queerness. Those things, by and large, the culture has accepted that those things are acceptable. And there are certainly outliers, and there are certainly people who are deeply invested in different ways in being racist, or sexist, or homophobic, but they're outside of the norm. Fat phobia, anti fat bias.

[00:38:50] **Sirius:** is very normalized. It is what we're supposed to do. It is how we're supposed to engage with people. Fat [00:39:00] people aren't supposed to exist. And so any conversation around that is perfectly acceptable. Whether it's a gentle correction or a question or downright humiliating degradation. Those are all acceptable because It's generally accepted that fatness is bad.

[00:39:27] **Hilary:** Yes. And I don't think most listeners would totally understand this idea that it would be your being, being eradicated, you know, your existence, your personhood being eradicated. I think in order to keep going with diet culture, we're like no, we love you. We love you, but just be smaller. And that is, That's really troubling.

[00:39:55] **Hilary:** Right? Because fat people do exist and have always existed. Always. And we've got a national pastime of trying to eradicate it.

[00:40:09] **Dana:** And if we didn't, diet culture wouldn't exist.

[00:40:13] **Speaker 4:** Right.

[00:40:16] **Sirius:** We wouldn't need that. Soft power oppression, if we weren't also trying to execute a hard power oppression.

[00:40:28] **Dana:** So maybe we end by asking listeners to please add fatness to your intersectional lens.

[00:40:39] **Hilary:** Yes. And challenge people for being shitty to fat

[00:40:43] **Speaker 4:** people.

[00:40:47] **Sirius:** It's really important to start examining the places where you have fat bias. And, you know, for those who are wanting to take it to the next level, how is it connected to your other biases? Because it doesn't stand alone in most cases.

[00:41:03] **Dana:** Well, thanks for listening, everybody

[00:41:05] **Hilary:** thanks for being here with us.

[00:41:07] **Dana:** See you soon.