

# Unsolicited: Fatties Talk Back

## Episode #8 Transcript

[00:00:00] **Mikey:** Hi everyone. And welcome back to Unsolicited: Fatties Talk Back, the podcast where fat people talk back to ableism. I'm one of your co-hosts Mikey Mercedes.

[00:00:12] **Jordan:** Hi, I'm Jordan Underwood.

[00:00:15] **Caleb:** I am Caleb Luna.

[00:00:16] **Bryan:** My name is Bryan.

[00:00:18] **Tommy:** Hi, my name is Tommy

[00:00:20] **Mikey:** And we're the fatties!

[00:00:27] **Mikey:** This episode, we're doing something a little bit different. Uh, thanks, Jordan. If you couldn't already tell, Da'Shaun was unable to make it this episode, but we have our lovely friend, Tommy, as our fifth co-host today. Tommy, would you like to introduce yourself to our listeners?

[00:00:47] **Tommy:** Hi, my name is Tommy. Um, I am a fat disabled genderqueer Jewish white person. Um, for me part of, part of white is that, uh, I like to label it because it's not a damn default and as a white person, I'm just always looking for ways to undermine whiteness in general. Um, I am in my fifties, I've been doing fat politics since I was a teenager. Um, just kind of here and there and I was not fat at the time. I learned fat politics before I was fat. And then boy did that come in handy later. So, hi, I'm super honored to be here. Um, I'm not Da'Shaun at all, but I'm just really excited and honored.

[00:01:41] **Mikey:** We're really, really, really happy you're here. Um, you know, you are someone who's really informed my own fat politics and the politic of like so many other people. So it's really, really wonderful to be in conversation with you like this, especially for this specific episode. Later, we're going to be responding to a listener right in for the very first time. Jules Good sent us an email. Hi, Jules. Everyone say "hi Jules."

[00:02:09] **Everyone:** Hi Jules.

[00:02:12] **Mikey:** All right. So Jules sent us an email about fatness and disability that we are very excited to get to. But first Jordan is going to introduce our first segment. Take it away, Jordan.

[00:02:24] **Jordan:** Oh my God. I was caught off guard. Okay. So as we know now, we've been doing this show for a while. We always like to start off with like our favorite food. So today we're going to be talking about our favorite munchies meal. So like, you know, if you like partake in like drugs or alcohol and you like are having a craving, what is that craving? Tell me about it, Tommy.

[00:03:01] **Tommy:** Well I can't partake in drinking or weed in relating to my illness. Um, but I certainly do munch things anyway, because food. Food is fun.

[00:03:15] **Mikey:** All forms of munchies are accepted here.

[00:03:19] **Tommy:** I like this question. Um, it made me wonder, like, what is a 'munchie' as distinct from food? And I sort of ended up thinking of just things where the individual pieces are smaller in some way. Um, and then what popped into my mind is this particular appetizer from this local Thai restaurant, it's called paradise beef. I haven't seen it at another restaurant and it's beef that's marinated and has coriander seeds all over it in tiny curly pieces. And it's just the best thing ever.

[00:03:58] **Jordan:** That sounds so good.

[00:04:00] **Caleb:** That sounds yummy.

[00:04:01] **Mikey:** Also. I mean, I also love myself some paradise beef, but I suppose we're not talking about the same thing.

[00:04:10] **Bryan:** I can tell you about my favorite munchies right now. My favorite munchies right now, are actually barbecue chips with mayonnaise.

[00:04:19] **Mikey:** Whoa, Bryan. You can't just drop something like that and then leave. We need to talk about it. We need to discuss it at length.

[00:04:34] **Bryan:** All right. I mean, you can, you can talk to me while I'm doing this, but like yeah. Barbecue, barbecue chips with mayonnaise. Like my boyfriend introduced me to this and it's like amazing.

[00:04:47] **Caleb:** Is he Canadian?

[00:04:48] **Bryan:** no, he is white though. I'm like, so are those different?

[00:04:54] **Mikey:** I don't know if that necessarily explains anything for me.

[00:04:58] **Jordan:** Wait.

[00:04:58] **Caleb:** I guess I'm asking because the first time I went to Canada, they asked if I wanted. With my French fries as like a dipping sauce. And I was like....

[00:05:06] **Jordan:** That is a common thing.

[00:05:08] **Caleb:** What the fuck is happening?

[00:05:09] **Jordan:** But that's not...

[00:05:10] **Mikey:** I think they do that in England too. Do they?

[00:05:14] **Jordan:** That's not just Canada, because I feel like that is true in other continents as well.

[00:05:24] **Tommy:** Oh man. Once I, I mean, I grew up here on the east coast and once my friend and I were visiting the west coast and we got burgers and they put mayo on them and we were traumatized. And this was dec— this was decades ago and we're still traumatized.

[00:05:41] **Caleb:** This is really making me want a burger. Okay so people sharing the mayonnaise as a dipping sauce: cultural exchange.

[00:05:51] **Mikey:** [laughs] I'm sorry. That's not right.

[00:06:00] **Mikey:** Why Bryan, what is it about that? Do you use as a dipping sauce for anything else?

[00:06:05] **Bryan:** Yeah, french fries! It's very French!

[00:06:21] **Mikey:** I don't care if it's French! The French colonized my people!

[00:06:25] **Caleb:** The only good thing about the French is the French revolution.

[00:06:29] **Jordan:** Wow. So true.

[00:06:35] **Mikey:** I like guillotines.

[00:06:37] **Jordan:** Hashtag Bring back the guillotine 2K two two (2022).

[00:06:40] **Caleb:** I'm literally wearing my Eat The Rich shirt.

[00:06:44] **Mikey:** I love it.

[00:06:45] **Jordan:** Oh my God. I love that so much. I just love the guillotine.

[00:06:52] **Mikey:** I'm really just, I'm just stuck on the wrongness of it all. Really? I'm sorry. I'm like, because. Okay, so I, um, and this is a little roundabout.

[00:07:03] **Mikey:** So like the other day I got one of those little containers of like Panera Bread macaroni, and cheese. Like, you know, the ones you can, you can put in the microwave and whatever. And like, I haven't had Panera Bread since 2015? Because like the last time I went, my chicken was raw and I was like, y'all did not microwave this.

[00:07:31] **Tommy:** [ gasp] Oh no!

[00:07:32] **Mikey:** Yeah, it was, it was really gross. It was like super pink. It was gross.

[00:07:36] **Jordan:** That was traumatizing.

[00:07:37] **Mikey:** Yeah. So, and that was, that was the Panera Bread at the Union Square in New York City. If you worked there, you should be ashamed of

yourself. [Note: this is 100% a joke. If you work at the Union Square Panera Bread: you are a hero.]

[00:07:46] **Jordan:** Here's the thing that Panera Bread has a lot going on.

[00:07:49] **Mikey:** It really does.

[00:07:50] **Jordan:** Always has a lot going on. You go in there and you're like: are you okay? And you know the answer is no. And I, I asked that both to the patrons and to the people working there.

[00:08:04] **Mikey:** Yeah.

[00:08:05] **Jordan:** Is anyone okay? Now, now you have to check the vaccine card. So there's a whole, they have the frickin, like the, like, you know, when you're at a club. The, like the thing, the airport, like a thing, you know.

[00:08:19] **Mikey:** Yeah. A rope. [laughs]

[00:08:23] **Jordan:** They have places roped off. I'm like, what the fuck? We're going to Nobu right now? Getting roped off to get into the fucking Panera Bread? [laughs]

[00:08:31] **Mikey:** Panera Bread in Union Square, no less.

[00:08:33] **Jordan:** But I don't know.

[00:08:34] **Mikey:** But yeah. So I bought the Panera Bread macaroni and cheese, and I heated it up. And it tasted exactly like hot mayonnaise.

[00:08:43] **Jordan:** Ewwwwwwwww. It was not for me.

[00:08:47] **Mikey:** Yeah it was gross.

[00:08:49] **Jordan:** Not to yuck somebody's yum. But.

[00:08:53] **Mikey:** I will yuck a yum all day, all day long. I will sip that haterade. I will do it. Like.

[00:09:01] **Jordan:** Wow.

[00:09:02] **Mikey:** But yeah, so I just can't, I just can't imagine wanting the mayonnaise with the chips, but like... bryan, I, I just, I hope I hope it's worth it. I hope you're really enjoying yourself.

[00:09:17] **Bryan:** Listen, it's so good. Like the savory...

[00:09:22] **Mikey:** Oh my god.

[00:09:23] **Jordan:** [laughs]

[00:09:24] **Bryan:** With the tangy? Like it's so great.

[00:09:29] **Tommy:** Listen to the joy in their voice.

[00:09:33] **Mikey:** That's not worth it to me.

[00:09:35] **Caleb:** That's also why I just, I think fat people are such creative eaters and I love eating with fat people because they...

[00:09:44] **Tommy:** yeah.

[00:09:44] **Caleb:** Like, um, come up with the best flavor combinations that you would never think of. And then all of a sudden you're like, holy shit, this is incredible.

[00:09:58] **Mikey:** I cannot believe this.

[00:10:00] **Caleb:** I personally will not be trying this...

[00:10:02] **Mikey:** [bursts out laughing]

[00:10:02] **Caleb:** ...However, I encourage any listeners who are curious, to do so. And let us know! Give us your feedback. Um, only if it's good though. I think we got the negative feedback covered, but if you got good feedback about mayonnaise as a dipping sauce, let us know.

[00:10:21] **Jordan:** Yeah. I think like too many of us are haters for us to actually ask for like negative feedback. Like I just think that it would get overwhelming at a certain point.

[00:10:31] **Mikey:** Honestly, but, um.

[00:10:34] **Caleb:** So that is not your, your munchie food, Mikey, is hot mayonnaise disguised as mac and cheese.

[00:10:40] **Mikey:** Absolutely not. No, I, I [laughs]

[00:10:47] **Bryan:** Hot mayonnaise!

[00:10:48] **Mikey:** I had never had, like, I had never, I had never like gotten high off, like an edible or smoked or anything like that, um, before February of last year.

[00:11:02] **Mikey:** And so now whenever I like have an edible or like I'm using my vape or something, I always want the thing that I first had when I got high and it was, um, my, this is horrible. So I was in the Bronx because my brother-in-law was dying and we were all like, just like sitting in, um, the living room of my childhood apartment and, and, uh, in the projects. And I really, really, really, really wanted a hot dog, but like a hot dog that was like slapped on the grill and almost burnt. Not burnt to a crisp, but you know what I mean? Like, like ch like

[00:11:48] **Caleb:** I fucking love a hot dog.

[00:11:50] **Bryan:** Oh my god. Absolutely. My mom only goes, she only goes to baseball games to get hot dogs. She goes on Dollar Dog Night so that she can get the hot dogs. 'Cause my dad loves sports, but she's like no. But for hotdogs? Fuck. Yeah.

[00:12:07] **Mikey:** But the thing about hot dogs is that like the texture sometimes is just like too soft. Like I want like a texture contrast, like, cause just say like, I dunno. Like in a sensory way, like just having like a boiled hot dog is like not appealing to me. Um, so I need it to be like...

[00:12:29] **Caleb:** sure yeah.

[00:12:30] **Mikey:** You know, like I need someone to like slap it on a pan and like get it crisped up. Um, and then she put like, she put sauerkraut on it with, with the onions and the red sauce and it was like... so good. And so I want that a little bit. I want that a little bit now whenever I get high, but yeah. Yeah.

[00:12:53] **Jordan:** I love hot dogs. People can, people can hate me for it. I love hot dogs.

[00:13:01] **Mikey:** I feel like this is a pretty pro-hot dog space right now.  
[laughs]

[00:13:05] **Caleb:** Yeah.

[00:13:06] **Jordan:** People can hate me for it. I'll make a Kraft mac and cheese, boxed mac and cheese, and then I'll make a hot dog and I'll just put it in a pot. I'll just eat it up. Like a five-year-old.

[00:13:15] **Mikey:** I had Kraft mac and cheese for the first time last year.

[00:13:20] **Jordan:** People can hate me for it. I don't care.

[00:13:23] **Mikey:** But like it is, I don't know if...

[00:13:25] **Tommy:** Nobody's hating it. [laughs]

[00:13:26] **Mikey:** Jordan's like in the corner, like rebelling, like "I don't care!!!!!" [Tommy laughs] and we're all just like, "no, we agree with your opinion."

[00:13:39] **Jordan:** Exactly. That's not my munchie of choice though. I'll say my munchi of choice would be like Cheetos.

[00:13:47] **Mikey:** Mmm wait crunchy or puffy?

[00:13:51] **Jordan:** Crunchy.

[00:13:51] **Mikey:** Yes.

[00:13:52] **Jordan:** Or, you know, and you have like, just like a block of cheese?



[00:13:58] **Tommy:** Yeah!!

[00:13:58] **Jordan:** Take the block of cheese to your bed. And it's like 3:00 AM. And then you're just like, it's just like you, a block of cheese, and a knife. And like that's all that matters.

[00:14:10] **Tommy:** A block of cheese, a knife and thou.

[00:14:13] **Jordan:** Yeah, that's it.

[00:14:15] **Tommy:** Yeah.

[00:14:15] **Mikey:** A block of cheese, a knife, and, if you haven't tried this yet you should, a pound cake from Entenmann's.

[00:14:26] **Jordan:** Oh, I love pound cakes so much.

[00:14:28] **Mikey:** I guarantee. Eat the pound cake with cheese, cheese of your choice. It could be sharp. It can be mild. It doesn't matter. It will improve the experience. I assure you. I promise. And then you can thank me later.

[00:14:40] **Tommy:** That reminds me of the fact that cheese, like cheddar, especially goes really well with challah bread and challah bread is a little bit sweet. So I kind of hear what you're saying about the pound cake, even though I haven't tried it.

[00:14:58] **Mikey:** It's the same effect. You're getting, you get it. Get it Tommy. Yeah.

[00:15:01] **Tommy:** Yeah. [Mikey and Tommy laugh]

[00:15:07] **Caleb:** I do partake. Um, but I like to eat before I smoke because I find eating after I smoke, sobers me up. And that's not what we're here for.

[00:15:19] **Mikey:** Mmm. No. [laughter]

[00:15:21] **Caleb:** Um, but my general munchies, um, sober or not. I love a Kettle brand salt and vinegar chip. Um, I also love a pretzel dipped in nutella. Um, It's yummy. And that's the good, like sweet, savory combo of my dreams.

[00:15:47] **Mikey:** I love a pretzel with most things.

[00:15:54] **Jordan:** Me too.

[00:15:55] **Caleb:** Yeah. Some people love a pretzel, one like a soft pretzel with mustard. Um, which makes me wonder if anybody loves a soft pretzel with mayonnaise.

[00:16:04] **Mikey:** Ew no no no!

[00:16:06] **Caleb:** If you're out there and you have some experience on a soft pretzel with mayonnaise— I fucking love a soft pretzel too. Auntie Anne's?

[00:16:16] **Jordan:** Auntie Annes!!!!!!

[00:16:18] **Caleb:** I get one everywhere. I love flying because there's an Auntie Anne's in the airport.

[00:16:22] **Jordan:** With the cinnamon?

[00:16:23] **Caleb:** It's like the only fucking place to get Auntie Anne's out here.

[00:16:28] **Jordan:** I will fuck that up. Auntie Anne's with the cinnamon? Oh, what about like, okay. I recently discovered that Cinnabon, there's a Cinnabon that is near my house and it delivers. And that was the best news of my life.

[00:16:44] **Caleb:** Oh my god. Hell yeah.

[00:16:46] **Jordan:** And it was really horrible because I ordered like six of them once and I ate three of them. And then I got so sick. But I'll still eat them.

[00:16:54] **Mikey:** Oh no! [laughs]

[00:16:56] **Jordan:** Honestly. [laughs]

[00:16:58] **Caleb:** The last time I had Cinnabon is because I drove like 25 minutes to the suburbs to go to Torrid because I needed pants and the fuckers didn't have my size in store.

[00:17:10] **Jordan:** Mood. Mood. Still mood.

[00:17:12] **Caleb:** My size was online only. And I was like, I'm too fucking fat for the fat store?!

[00:17:25] **Jordan:** That's always the kicker, right?

[00:17:27] **Caleb:** So. I got a Cinnabon. Since I was at the fucking mall anyway. Um, and I stopped at Auntie Anne's, you better believe, and I, that was my trip. Um,

[00:17:38] **Mikey:** Can I be honest.

[00:17:40] **Caleb:** Yeah.

[00:17:41] **Mikey:** I've never had Auntie Anne's.

[00:17:43] **Tommy:** I've never had a Cinnabon!

[00:17:47] **Jordan:** Wait. Wait. Wait.

[00:17:48] **Bryan:** What?!

[00:17:48] **Jordan:** Okay. Mikey. When you return to the motherland.

[00:17:57] **Mikey:** Yes! [laughs]

[00:17:57] **Jordan:** Where I am, we'll gonna go get some.

[00:18:02] **Mikey:** Oh, really?

[00:18:02] **Jordan:** We can go to Queens and go to the mall. We go to the Cheesecake Factory and the Queens Mall. And then we can go to Auntie Anne's, also in the mall.

[00:18:12] **Mikey:** You know what I, okay. This is like totally unrelated to Auntie Anne's, but like, just thinking about going back to New York, I really... oh, okay. And this is the annoying thing about being fat. Mind you, this is fatphobia. The annoying thing about being fat. The one thing, the one thing...

[00:18:33] **Jordan:** The one annoying thing. Alright Mikey, what is it?

[00:18:37] **Mikey:** Is that every single seat in a restaurant in K-Town is too fucking small. That's where all of the best Korean restaurants are in New York and everything is super tiny for no fucking reason.

[00:18:52] **Mikey:** And so now I'm going to have to like order my tteokbokki instead of just going and getting it in person, but it's fine. That's not going to happen for a long time anyway, because New York is a radioactive COVID wasteland right now.

[00:19:04] **Jordan:** So true.

[00:19:06] **Caleb:** Now I just want some snacks.

[00:19:08] **Jordan:** Yeah. Me too [laughter]

[00:19:10] **Caleb:** Also I think it's so fatphobic that malls are the only places that have like Cinnabons and Auntie Anne's because like... there aren't fat clothes at the mall. So you got the fast food, but no fat people. It's fuckin' cultural appropriation by straight-sized assholes. Every straight size asshole listening to this [group laughter] I would like an accountability statement from you about how you're going to mend my personal relationship with Auntie Anne's.

[00:19:42] **Jordan:** Hashtag reclaim Auntie Anne's.

[00:19:43] **Caleb:** And you can send those to [unsolicitedFTB@gmail.com](mailto:unsolicitedFTB@gmail.com) titled accountability statement from a straight-sized asshole.

[00:19:54] **Mikey:** Can I just say this is why, this is why I'm fitphobic because... [group laughter]

[00:20:03] **Mikey:** Fitphobic!!

[00:20:04] **Jordan:** Hashtag reclaim the food court 2022.

[00:20:07] **Mikey:** Hashtag fitphobia is real.

[00:20:15] **Jordan:** Hashtag fitphobic and proud. [Bryan laughs]

[00:20:19] **Mikey:** I was, I had my Twitter username as "Mikey is openly fit phobic" yesterday. [group laughter]

[00:20:27] **Bryan:** Honestly, I'm pretty fit phobic. Working out is, working out is like... I fear it. I fear it. I fear it.

[00:20:35] **Caleb:** I mean, I think that's such a loaded statement. Whoa. Cause there's so much about exercise that is well, cause it's... it's only about like the way it's been framed, especially as fat people, is as a punishment is, as it's something to do so that we don't have the bodies that we do. And it's like, yeah, of course, you're going to fucking hate it if that's like your entire relationship to it. Um, but I also think this is a great segue into our main topic. Um,

[00:21:07] **Jordan:** I love how good we all are at segues.

[00:21:10] **Mikey:** So good.

[00:21:11] **Caleb:** So we're gonna, we have, uh, an email from a listener, um, asking us about the relationship between fatness and disability, um, that we are going to respond to. Bryan, take it away.

[00:21:26] **Bryan:** Hi, unsolicited FTB hosts. My work is primarily about bringing disability justice practices, what I see as the behavioral and attitudinal side of things and, accessibility, what I see as the logistics of creating inclusive spaces slash practices, together to create community spaces slash services that are not only accessible, but also embrace disabled people as vital community members, rather than as an afterthought.

[00:21:57] **Bryan:** For those of you who identify as fat and disabled. How do you square fatness with disability? Do you experience fatness and disability in similar ways personally and socially. From an accessibility and justice standpoint, should fatness and anti-fatness be a part of the broader disability justice landscape and what nuances need to be included to avoid oversimplifying how these identities overlap and interact. Warmly, our good friend Jules Good.

[00:22:28] **Bryan:** Let's take a quick moment just to sort of frame the conversation, Caleb, related to sort of how we are like where we're, what's our positionality related to disability. Um, I guess, do you want to go first, Caleb?

[00:22:42] **Caleb:** I can go first. Um, so I, um. I mentioned on the podcast before that I am autistic. I got my diagnosis last year, so there's a lot of like retro acting, uh, or retrofitting my experience as, um, a autistic. Um, I also, I have ADHD, which I've known for a lot longer, um, and identified with for a lot longer. Um, I also have, um, had a chronic pain from an injury, uh, when I was a child that left my legs different lengths, um, and so I also have limited mobility in my legs and hips. Um, and then, you know, depression. Um, so those are my, I think, uh, disabling identities, I would say. Bryan?

[00:23:42] **Bryan:** Sure. Um, for me, uh, I actually only recently started, uh, really thinking about, uh, myself as disabled from that lens, as I sort of learned about disability justice more broadly and sort of understood my place. I think also my, like my recent struggles with ADHD have, um, have really, uh, helped me understand the, sort of the expansiveness of disability along with the struggles I've had over the past couple of years with my hydradenitis suppurativa, which is a, a, an inflammation, a chronic inflammatory disease that I have.

[00:24:29] **Bryan:** Um, and so I do identify as disabled now. I didn't for a long time, even when I got like disability help, like disability services in college, which I didn't do until the last year, which I should have done beforehand because it would've helped me so much in class. Um, and I think for a long time, I didn't think about anybody being disabled or having a disability unless you could tell that they had one. And that was a big thing for me to sort of like reorient my, my thoughts around, um. I think we'll get into some of the conversation about how fatness is an is a, is particularly, is an interesting lens to talk about this, the difference between fatness being a disability or being disabling, and why? Not because like, it's actually a problem, but because of the way that society sort of takes the whole thing. So that's where I am. Tommy?

[00:25:40] **Tommy:** So I am severely disabled with an illness that has gone through many name changes over the years. Um, but the current and best name for anyone to use now is, well, it's very long and I'll say it, but then I'll abbreviate it for you.

[00:25:58] **Tommy:** The long name is myalgic encephalomyelitis. There will not be a quiz later, um, but you can abbreviate it M.E. And probably use a dot after M and a dot after E so it's not mixed up with the pronoun. Um, it is a multisystemic illness that is neurological, endocrinological, immunological, digestive, cognitive, metabolic. It's a sleep disorder. Everything is broken. And

people can have it at different levels of severity, but the quote unquote "mildest" level—— and we all know now, side note, that, you know, the word 'mild' can be used in a scientific way by the institution of medicine and does not necessarily mean mild. I think more people are learning that through our COVID experience, but the, the mildest version that you can have of M.E., and still have M.E., is that you have lost 50% of your life.

[00:27:00] **Tommy:** That's the mildest. So I am in the severe category. Um, you know, there are pros and cons of, of making categories, but sometimes you kind of need to for logistics. Um, I am in the third out of four, so not the most severe, I wouldn't be on this podcast if I were the most severe, I would probably have a feeding tube and be in a dark room, 24/7. Um. But I have very few usable hours in a day, in a week. Sometimes it's just usable minutes. Um, the fact that I'm on here today, which I'm so happy to be, is a result of having started preparing and trying to hoard spoons last weekend, you know. And will affect the rest of my life for at least another week.

[00:27:55] **Tommy:** So most of my days are like, fed and med. You know, can I keep myself fed and take my medications? And that is it. I mean, it's, it's odd because it's, in some ways it's an invisible disability. It doesn't super-duper show like here sitting on a Zoom. Um, it may not show on the podcast, but it is... As soon as you sort of enter into my life you're like whoa. That, you know, I'm basically bedridden almost all the time with these little bits of windows. And I can sometimes choose when a window will be by, you know, going into spoon debt or spoon borrowing or whatever. So, yeah, I've been, I've been disabled for, I guess, 29 years now. It's a beast of an illness and has not gotten the attention it should. And really sadly a lot of people with long COVID are getting it. And I just want them to learn from us, from what has been researched by this illness. So fewer people can get as sick. And this has a weird connection back to that fitness thing we were talking about? Um.

[00:29:14] **Bryan:** Yeah. Yeah.

[00:29:15] **Tommy:** Which is not the main point here, but I think that it's worth saying: this illness that I have, M.E.... gets worse and worse with exercise. Exercise is absolutely contraindicated. And that is so hard for medicine and everyone to accept and believe and yet it gets proven over and over and over again. And they've done study after study and contrasted people with M.E. to people who had a very low level of fitness, or people who they call in the studies who had been "sedentary". And they have to, they have to use those people to contrast it, to prove this is not a conditioning issue. Um, it's, it's not a

depression issue. It's not an, uh, an issue of sort of, "oh, you think you're ill, therefore you act ill" or... it's none of those things. It's something at a cellular level that is not figured out yet. Um, It's a hell of a thing to have this illness where I absolutely must not exercise and must not exert myself. Um, and also here I am and I'm fat. And y'all know what people see when they look at me. They see a person walking oddly, right? Who's fat. And they're like, you know what they're everybody's first thought is: oh, if you weren't so fat, you wouldn't be walking badly.

[00:30:51] **Caleb:** Oh yeah.

[00:30:52] **Tommy:** And it's so wrong. It's so incorrect. It's so medically, scientifically incorrect. Um...

[00:31:03] **Caleb:** Thank you for being here, Tommy. We really appreciate it.

[00:31:07] **Tommy:** Thank you. I, I hope that wasn't too long, uh, a blurb about M.E.

[00:31:12] **Mikey:** No, absolutely not. We're really, really, really glad that, you know, you've done so much in order to be here with us and share your thoughts with us. And we're just like, so, so grateful that you're here.

[00:31:30] **Tommy:** Oh, thank you. I'm very glad to be here. I wouldn't have invested all that if this didn't mean a lot to me.

[00:31:40] **Jordan:** I think just Mikey and I are left to go. Mikey, do you want to go?

[00:31:45] **Mikey:** Ooh, sure. [laughs] Um. So my, uh... I think that I identified a lot with a lot of what Bryan was saying with regard to only recently understanding that I'm disabled, um, And grappling with that. Because I really, and, and it wasn't something conscious, I just always thought when I was younger, that being disabled was something that I could see, was something that like permanently relegates someone to the realm of like constant 24/7 care.

[00:32:27] **Mikey:** And like, I just... which was so incorrect and so like an example of how sneaky and pervasive ableism is just because like, no one had to, no one told me the things that I believed. I just believed them. And I'm still



trying to understand how I came to believe those things about being, about like what disabledness was.

[00:32:55] **Mikey:** Um, but I, um, I have ADHD, which I was diagnosed with last year. Um. And I have also started thinking of my eating disorder, which has been... it's it's I, I think a lot about like Erin Harrop's work and like how, um, Erin Harrop found essentially that like for people that are fat, like we wait an average of 13 years to get eating disorder treatment. And like... I've been waiting longer than that. And I'm 24. So I just, just to like illustrate that.

[00:33:51] **Mikey:** My eating disorder and my disordered eating... I've, I've dipped in and out of lots of different kinds of eating disorders. Um, if you have an eating disorder, you know, that it's never black and white, um, you know, with regard to like, I'm, I am anorexic or I am whatever, you usually dip in and out of a lot of different kinds of restriction and harm. Um, so yeah, and then I'm also... my newest, I think disability is that like about almost three years ago now, it'll be three years in, um, in October. But, um, the October after I started grad school, I just woke up one day and with searing pain in my lower back and my upper thighs. And you know, now I struggle to walk. And it's something that like, I don't see as permanent. It's definitely something that I am working on rehabbing even though doctors are not. And, um, yeah, so those are, those are my things. Oh. And also like depression, extreme depression. Um, yeah, I've definitely like been depressed or and struggled with depressive episodes since I was like 10. So, um, yeah. And I also have complex PTSD.

[00:35:32] **Mikey:** We are...

[00:35:32] **Jordan:** Nice. Nice.

[00:35:35] **Mikey:** We contain multitudes, right? Like.

[00:35:38] **Jordan:** We really do because get ready for mine. I feel like I have a nice list for you. [Mikey laughs] So I feel like, I will say... like when I first started engaging in like fat politics, I was someone who was like very strongly, uh, like believes that like fatphobia and ableism were like one in the same. And like, I always found my fatness to be disabling in a way. Um, and I don't know if that's just because of the way that I grew up or like, because I grew up in a very thin space and everyone in my family is thin or what, but like, I always considered myself to be like, not necessarily like I was disabled, but I existed in a periphery

of disability. Or like, I don't even know if that's the right way to say it, but whatever you get it.

[00:36:27] **Jordan:** And then when I was 20, I was diagnosed with Borderline Personality Disorder. And that was when I like very much so was like, embraced my, uh, experience as a disabled person, um, and my, uh, inability to emotionally regulate at all. [laughs] um, and then I would say, uh... But throughout all of that, I also considered myself to be able-bodied. Like, you know, even though I did consider my fatness to be disabling in a way, I was like very much so acknowledged. Like I was a very like athletic person growing up. And like, I went to school for musical theater and I was dancing like six days a week. I was very just like up 'n' at 'em. And then during COVID, uh, I was about a year on testosterone and my spinal fluid stopped draining. Um, and I was diagnosed with intercranial hypertension, and it's like, your spinal fluid stops, uh, draining. And then your like eyeballs kind of like explode. Crazy situation 'cause they never diagnose it on time and like most of the time, like by the time you get diagnosed, you have... not permanent vision, uh, issues, but I was in an eye patch for like three months. Honestly, it looks so hot though, that eye patch like, bring it back. Bring back the eye patch for me is what I have to say about that.

[00:38:00] **Caleb:** Is that related to testosterone?

[00:38:04] **Jordan:** Yes. So basically, um, it's pretty rare normally... um, normally they say that you get it if you are a 'woman' of childbearing age, if you are a "obese" 'woman' of childbearing age. Um, so that was a fun time in the hospital for me, uh. Getting misgendered and also trying to convince them that, like, I have this because of my testosterone use and not because of my weight, but, uh, when you Google it, it's like the third search result, is like "FTM intercranial hypertension testosterone" like it's, I don't know. It's it's, a very understudied disorder, but there is, there are, there is evidence that it is because of testosterone. And for me specifically, just because I hadn't gained any weight in the time, like around, when I, uh, was diagnosed with it, that it was kind of, to me, very clear what was happening. Um, but so that I had that and that, uh, that happened. And then about like eight months after that, uh, similar to Mikey, I don't really know what happened, but like my back just like stopped working. Um, and I haven't really been able to walk since June. Um. And then, and that I similarly, I, I, I hope that it's temporary. Like I am rehabbing it as well. Um, I'm like, I don't know, but also I recently found out that I have like a seven centimeter cyst on my ovaries so like, we don't really know like what the implications of that are with the pain. And like, so I just felt like a lot of stuff going on in my body that because of COVID and because the hospitals

are so overwhelmed, um, it's just taken so much longer than it, it should have to even just get tests and scans and like insurance declining things that they shouldn't be declining. Because I'm like, if all the doctors say I need a CT, why are you declining my CT request? Just wondering. But that's the vibes.

[00:40:47] **Caleb:** Yeah. I wanted to kind of ground this conversation in, um, a really influential piece of writing for me about the relationship between fatness and disability written by, um, Anna Mallow called "Disability Studies Gets Fat" and she's, um, a not fat, disabled woman who is partnered with a fat woman. Um, so she also is, she's a disability studies scholar, but also a fat studies scholar. And, um, yeah. Her work or I've seen like... part of why I appreciate her is her talking about like, having to challenge and come to terms with her own fatphobia in order to recognize that she was like into her partner.

[00:41:29] **Caleb:** And she talks about, um, sort of contending with her fatphobia as, um, what led her to love, because she was... without doing that, she would not have been able to see her partner, now her wife, as her as a potential match. But, and so her, uh, "Disability Studies Gets Fat" kind of out... it's speaking to the disabled community and discussing the sort of differences between the medical model of disability, which is, um, kind of possibly what most of us are familiar with in terms of like: we get a diagnosis from a doctor; we are, uh, diagnosed as disabled and we have, you know, prescriptions and, uh, medical, uh, paper trail and all this stuff, um, versus the social model of disability, which, uh, frames disability as a social experience and as people being disabled, not by our bodies, but by, um, the, not just the environment, but the sociality, uh, the way that we are, have set up or citing culture to socialize and be exclusive of disabled people, which I think is really coming to an extreme head right now with COVID and the differences in, um, safety practices that are even further leaving behind and putting at risk, um, severely disabled and immunocompromised people.

[00:42:57] **Caleb:** Um, so the, that essay, I just want to shout it out because I, I read it in undergrad and it was such an important and influential piece of me to understand that like, you know, not all fat people are disabled, but there is a disabling experience about fatness when we have a world that is not available to us, that is not accessible to us.

[00:43:20] **Caleb:** Um, and I think similarly to what Mikey and Bryan are saying, like, it took me a long time to-- like I became disabled in middle school and only within the last two or three years um, did I come to understand that. Um, and I, in retrospect it was --which it was like already deep into my activist work um,

and I think so many fat activists are resistant to ideas of disability because out of fear, right? Out of the, the necessity to perform the good fatty trope.

[00:43:53] **Jordan:** 100%.

[00:43:55] **Caleb:** Um, for safety and whatever. But what that meant for me was that I was in comparing myself to non-disabled fat people and being like, 'oh, this non-disabled fat person can do this. Like why can't I?' and while not really understanding that it's because my body broke and we have different, um, possibilities and that comes up in so many, um, so many avenues. Like I, I just... the sort of compulsion to be a non-disabled fat person. And also like what Tommy was saying.

[00:44:32] **Caleb:** I've also had an experience where like strangers on the street have like, come at me because of the way I'm walking and like, been very... Like very early on in COVID, um, I was walking my dog and somebody, I was like walking by an apartment complex and somebody, um, shouted at me like, "Hey, I have some like exercise DVDs I can give you. And then you won't walk like that." and I was like, 'motherfucker, I'm walking because I'm disabled. And because my back fucking hurts,' it's not because I'm fat. Um, you know, and so, but the, the ways that people are so quick to, um, blame our um, disabilities on our size. And it's complicated too, because like, I think many of us are pointing to, we have disabilities that make it harder to move and, and can lead to weight gain, or a medication can lead to weight gain. Right? So there's, um, so many factors that lead into this and I just don't think it's helpful when non-disabled fat people are so resistant to the idea that like fatness can be a disabling experience. Especially small fat, straight sized cis heterosexual white people. If y'all want to be like, 'oh fuck that I'm not disabled. I'm fat and I'm beautiful and blah, blah, blah, Meghan Trainor, [laughter] good for fucking you, but there all, a whole lot of other people...

[00:46:00] **Jordan:** How did Caleb bring Meghan Trainor into this? [group laughter] I'm all about that bass.

[00:46:08] **Caleb:** So yeah, that's just been like my, like my journey and like my frustration with non-disabled fat community. Um, and the way that it like kind of fucks with my own self image, which is part of my own shit but, um, yeah. I think that there's-- to put, to wrap a bow on it, there's like a real ableism problem in fat communities. Like Anna Mollow with that article to talk about, to address the fatphobia in disabled communities, but I also think we need to address the ableism in fat communities. Um, particularly with fat, non-disabled

fat people's resistance to, um, identifying with disability, um, or being associated with disabled people, um, at all. And I'll let Tommy go. 'Cause I know you've been waiting for a second to, to jump in.

[00:47:00] **Tommy:** Oh, no. Not waiting in that way. Like, I love everything that you said. Thank you for that. Um, yeah, I wanted to... I have a couple thoughts. One is that I wanted to expand a little bit about the medical model and the social model of disability.

[00:47:16] **Tommy:** Um, everything Caleb said, I totally agree with and understand to be correct. Um, and also there's in the medical model, a vibe of, um, 'it's too bad that this disability happened. It would be better if it hadn't,' right? And there's been a lot of incredible disability justice work. I'm especially going to shout out like deaf people and autistic people. Like those are two really big, uh, disabled communities--

[00:47:44] **Caleb:** Woot woot! [laughter]

[00:47:45] **Tommy:** --that have especially been like, 'Hey dude, I like myself this way and that's not something I would change, even if I could.' Uh, other, you know, pockets of disability have done that too, but especially deaf people and autistic people. Um, and that's really, really important and incredible. And there's also a section of, of disability justice that goes too far with that and pushes, and sort of completely negates the medical model. And I'm saying this from my perspective of having been like incredibly sick for 29 years, in intense pain every single day for 29 years. You know what? There is nothing fine or okay or redeeming about this disability that I have, and I would change it in the hot New York minute. Like it's not at all. And so we really need both-- the social model and the medical model. And I, I kind of like to think it, think of it, like when a person is learning to read, some person will use only phonics and learn it. And some person will learn only use only whole language and learn to read. And a lot of people need some of each. So it's like overall big picture, we really need both of those.

[00:49:08] **Tommy:** And should I, would it be okay to dive in to part of the email that we're addressing?

[00:49:18] **Mikey:** Yes!

[00:49:18] **Tommy:** Okay. So there's a part of it that really jumped out at me and it says "should fatness and anti-fatness be a part of the broader disability

justice landscape?" and... I have a very strong feeling that while every justice movement needs to be aware of the other ones, the answer to this question is absolutely not because... More than one justice movement has tried to sort of subsume fat politics under its umbrella and be like, 'oh, you're an arm of this.'

[00:49:58] **Tommy:** Way back to the 1970s, when the very horrible person, um, wrote a book called *Fat is a Feminist Issue*. Um, and it was a very anti-fat book and not worth anyone's time so I don't advise anyone to even look at it. But the, the point of that book is that that phrase was just buzzing all around white feminism, particularly, and whole bunch of white feminists were like... and it was very anti-fat so that was a problem. But another aspect of the problem was that it was saying, 'oh, fatness, oh, this is about feminism.' And actually it's not, it's about fatness, right? Because you know, anti-fatness also affects men and also affects people who are neither men nor women. And so to apply the disability question, it's incredibly important that while we look at all of these links and analyze them and work on the ways that these two oppressions meld, that we not let fatness be under a disability umbrella.

[00:51:08] **Tommy:** I mean, for one thing, plenty of fat people are actually not disabled. Like plenty. I know tons of fat people who are literally not disabled and not even just, they wouldn't be disabled if access were better, but like they actually live a non-disabled life and they're discriminated— and that doesn't mean that they live a non marginalized life, right? They're highly discriminated against for being fat! But they're not disabled. And that's different.

[00:51:41] **Tommy:** And I find that when fatness is tried to like... when a justice movement that isn't fat politics tries to pull fat politics under its umbrella or say like, 'this is one arm of us,' it sort of erases fatphobia as its own unique oppression. And it also diminishes connections between fatphobia and other oppressions. Like so many people are doing this incredible work. Um, shout out to Da'Shaun who isn't here and lots of other people on connections between anti-blackness and anti-fatness. But if anti-fatness gets sort of nudged under the umbrella of disability justice, that diminishes its connections with Black justice movements. And all the justice movements, like they need to touch each other and talk to each other and all the oppressions meld, you know, as I think we all know, and they each need their own like... Fat politics is its own thing, to allow you to see like the uniqueness of it and the uniqueness of the ways that it interacts with all the other oppressions.

[00:52:57] **Tommy:** How does anti-fatness interact with transphobia? Like that's really important. And if we're thinking, if we're locating anti-fatness as under

disability justice in some broad structural way, we're not going to be able to reach it in a way to be like, 'oh, but how does that connect with racism? How does that connect with transphobia?' So I just, I mean, I'm not expecting everyone to agree or anything, but I, I feel really strongly that anti-fatness, no, it should not be part of the broader disability justice landscape, except in so far as all disability justice should also be thinking about fat justice. I mean, yes, of course. Think about it, but be really careful to let it be its own oppression.

[00:53:45] **Jordan:** Yeah, I think you're so right. 'Cause it does in a lot of ways, like diminish, just diminish fat politics to, to insert it under disability justice or any, any justice movement.

[00:54:01] **Mikey:** For sure.

[00:54:04] **Caleb:** I, I struggled with it just because yes, not all of people are disabled, but some of us are. And I think like [Tommy agreeing in the background] yeah, I think I see what you're saying.

[00:54:19] **Tommy:** The way people can have multiple oppressions, of course I didn't— —I hope I didn't sound like people can't be fat and disabled.

[00:54:26] **Caleb:** Oh, you didn't at all. But I think, can I have a— — I think what I heard you say was that like, fatness should not be subsumed under disability, but I think that they should, which I agree with, um, but I think they should definitely talk to each other.

[00:54:43] **Tommy:** Oh, of course. Every day!

[00:54:46] **Caleb:** A lot of what you said reminded me of Eli Clare's book *Brilliant Imperfection*. Um, and it's really struggling with this idea of cure and like a lot of what you were talking about earlier, Tommy, in terms of, um, a lot of disability justice people not rejecting cure and then other disabled people being like, 'actually I would like a higher quality of life,' right? Um, and, uh, but when I read that book, I also think about weight loss as cure, right?

[00:55:12] **Tommy:** Yeah.

[00:55:12] **Caleb:** And so I think that there are ways, the, um, the rhetoric and the discourse, um, are useful to speak to one another, but they are absolutely distinct experiences.



[00:55:24] **Tommy:** As long as they each have their own sort of representative at the table. I hate that metaphor, but you know what I mean? As opposed to one of them being just under someone else's umbrella, then I will be very happy. And of course, like, in fatness, actually at a certain size of fatness can be disabling justice fatness, and that's equally important too. And we never want to leave behind the most fat, the most fat people.

[00:55:51] **Caleb:** Yeah or you can be disabled by your fatness.

[00:55:54] **Tommy:** Right. You can be disabled like fatness and you can be disabled by, um, you know, the theater not having chairs big enough for fat people, which is more in the social model idea.

[00:56:05] **Caleb:** And I also wanna say being disabled by your fatness doesn't mean you're, doesn't make your fatness illegitimate or like harmful or anything like that. Like that is a real fucking thing. And those people should also not be, um, shunned by either community and should not be shamed or judged or, um, told to undergo any sort of uniform or prescriptive, uh, response to that.

[00:56:37] **Tommy:** Oh, absolutely. Yeah. In fact, fat politics should be always remembering to center the most fat people.

[00:56:47] **Caleb:** Yes. I'm sorry. I'm very passionate about this. I'm talking a lot, but I think Mikey, you've had something to add for a minute.

[00:56:57] **Mikey:** Oh no, I love it. I love, I love seeing you get all riled up.

[00:57:03] **Jordan:** Me too. I love when Caleb gets riled up. It's so fun.

[00:57:09] **Mikey:** Two things. So if anyone wants to hear a little bit more about why, um, the book *Fat is a Feminist Issue* is trash, or if you want a resource that sort of discusses, like what exactly fat activism is and how it's separate from different kinds of things like HAES [Health At Every Size] or body positivity, you should absolutely pick up Charlotte Cooper's book *Fat Activism*, because I am currently working my way through it. I started reading it because of the whole NAAFA chubby chaser thing that I talked about with Sydneysky on my Patreon. Um, because Charlotte Cooper gets into the history of the fat activism movement, its ties to feminist activism, um, decades ago, and also like where it diverges and the different people involved and just like it's, it's also just a really good thing to read, particularly the first part, because Charlotte Cooper is so clear. Like she doesn't put boundaries on what fat activism is, but she does put



boundaries on other entities that want to claim fat activism as its own. And that is so, so important, especially for people who are still questioning like where health fits into fat activism. [Mock whisper] The answer won't surprise you. It doesn't really. Anyway. So, um, so yeah, Charlotte Cooper's Fat Activism, thousand thousand thousand percent. That book has been wonderful. Has kind of a lacking, um, diet like analysis of race, but like she is a white scholar. So like, I'm not surprised.

[00:58:50] **Caleb:** And she's British, right?

[00:58:52] **Mikey:** And she's British.

[00:58:52] **Caleb:** They like invented the whole thing.

[00:58:55] **Mikey:** Yeah. Like I'm not expecting for them to be good at it. Anyway. So like. [laughs]

[00:59:04] **Caleb:** Because they're not!

[00:59:05] **Mikey:** Like absolutely pick up the book. It's still extremely worth reading. Um, yes.

[00:59:12] **Caleb:** Yeah. I love that book.

[00:59:14] **Mikey:** The second thing is, I'm so glad we're having this conversation because I really, really get so frustrated with people who pretend that fatness can't be disabling. And also, because, because one, I think that that's just a complete eraser of a lot of like our infinifat and like death fat folks in the community who like live in their fat bodies, are targets of fatphobia, of ableism, because there's also like... the ableism comes out strong, uh, when someone is like, 'oh, well, you know, we shouldn't put limits on how, like how fat people are in this movement, because it is important that like we center the most marginalized people who are the, who are the greatest victims of fatphobia' and then people are like, 'but like, are you talking about like really fat people or the kind of fat people that are on TLC?'

[01:00:18] **Caleb:** But you should still be healthy! [sarcastically]

[01:00:21] **Tommy:** But as long as you're healthy! [sarcastically]

[01:00:24] **Mikey:** And it's like, but, ' like, they're not like representative of' —I'm like, but 'why, what are like, What? WHAT?' Um, so yeah, that's nonsense. Um, there's a lot of ableism in the, in the fat activism movement and I'm so glad that you mentioned it. Because like it's really, really, really frustrating. Like my—I've gotten fatter since becoming physically disabled.

[01:00:51] **Caleb:** Yeah!

[01:00:51] **Jordan:** Big same.

[01:00:52] **Mikey:** And like, that's a real thing. I'm like, yeah. I think that what I was just going to say was that like, I don't like it when, when people like... the goal, ultimately —one of my goals, at least, as a fat liberation activist is to uncouple health as a requirement for respect and dignity towards fat people. Like, like we should not have to be healthy in order to be treated like people. That isn't a statement on, on whether or not like being disabled has any impact on fatness. Like, and that people take it too to the point where they're like, 'oh, well, weight it's just like, there. It can't be impacted by anything.' And like, that's not true. Like people have eating disorders, they lose weight. People have eating disorders, they gain weight. Some people don't do that. That's like a valid experience. Regardless. We have different bodies. The ultimate goal of fat activism should not be to like mythologize what weight is in order to make a pathway towards respect. It's about saying that like you should respect us regardless. Like, it doesn't matter what, what we have by virtue or, or not by virtue of our fatness. We deserve respect and dignity. And so that's what I was going to say. But what were you, what were you thinking?

[01:02:12] **Caleb:** Um, yeah, I was just like, thinking about, um, a specific experience I had recently where, um, somebody posted in a Facebook group and I mean, this is like complicated and potentially triggering, but they were like, "yeah, it's like fucked up. Absolutely. Because," they're like, "my boyfriend says it's like too hard to have sex with me. And I'm like"... they were looking for, um, like accommodation support for, um, to have better sex with their partner. And all these people— first of all, yes. Dump that motherfucker because that's not something you should say to somebody.

[01:02:53] **Mikey:** Oh yeah. One thousand percent.

[01:02:55] **Jordan:** Also that sex is probably just bad. You're probably just bad at sex.

[01:03:00] **Mikey:** Honestly.

[01:03:02] **Tommy:** Call the Whole Man Disposal Service. [laughter]

[01:03:05] **Caleb:** So many people went in the comments like, 'oh fuck that. I've never had a problem. I'm so flexible. Blah, blah, blah'

[01:03:14] **Tommy:** They're bragging! They're trying to get themselves, like locate themselves closer to the non oppressed category because it makes them nervous.

[01:03:24] **Mikey:** Yeah.

[01:03:25] **Jordan:** Yeah!

[01:03:25] **Caleb:** Right! And I was like, okay, good for you.

[01:03:27] **Tommy:** I'm not like that. I'm not like that.

[01:03:29] **Caleb:** But I do! Like I do have chronic pain. I do have limited mobility. I would love to know more about these assistive devices that you're bringing up. You know?

[01:03:41] **Jordan:** I feel like in all... in sex in general, people are so like averse to like bringing in external devices of any sort. And I'm like get with the times.

[01:03:55] **Mikey:** It is the saddest thing ever. Saddest thing ever.

[01:03:58] **Jordan:** Whatever it's 2022. We have so much we can bring to the table these days. I bought a vibrator that is a hammer. It's a hammer. It looks like a hammer, but it's a vibrator. 2022.

[01:04:13] **Mikey:** Can you send me a link? Can you send me a link?

[01:04:16] **Jordan:** Oh, don't worry. I'll send you a link.

[01:04:18] **Caleb:** Is it also a functional hammer?

[01:04:20] **Jordan:** I mean, I haven't tried it yet, but... I dunno, I use it the other day. And one of these people I'm having sex with is an electrician and they were like, 'damn, you got me working overtime.' And I was like, 'so true bestie.'

[01:04:36] **Jordan:** Okay. Anyways, I was going to say something so important earlier, and then I got distracted by the sex talk.

[01:04:44] **Caleb:** Always.

[01:04:45] **Jordan:** It'll come back to me. I believe in myself.

[01:04:48] **Tommy:** One of the reasons that fat politics needs to be seen as its own justice movement is so that there is room to say exactly several of the things we've been saying, which is that:

[01:05:00] **Tommy:** There are fat people who are not disabled. There are fat people who are disabled with other disabilities. And there are fat people who are disabled from fatness, and those are all true. And those are all really, um, big groups of people. You know, I'm not talking like two people in any of those categories. And in order to leave room for all of those people to be part of things, that's why I just don't want it to be an arm of disability justice.

[01:05:29] **Caleb:** Yeah.

[01:05:29] **Jordan:** I remember what I was going to say. Can I say it?

[01:05:33] **Caleb:** Yeah.

[01:05:34] **Jordan:** So I just want to speak to like, um, like the ableism in fat politics, because I think that's something that like, even I, as someone who has identified as disabled for a long time, like I had to reckon with so much of my own ableism after I became physically disabled in a way that I was not at all—and my fatphobia. Like both. Because the second that I wasn't able to like keep up with myself and also like my peers, I was like, 'wow, I hate my body so much.'

[01:06:12] **Caleb:** Yeah.

[01:06:13] **Jordan:** 'Wow I'm so fucking gross, like, wow. I hate, like, I hate my fatness' in a way that I haven't felt since I was 14.

[01:06:21] **Tommy:** It's hard. There's gale force winds telling us to hate ourselves for all of these reasons.

[01:06:28] **Jordan:** I've been doing this work for, so, I mean, oh yeah. I relative to my, to my life, you know, and I'm like, I was, I was so shocked by it in myself. I was like, whoa, whoa, whoa.

[01:06:40] **Tommy:** Right, right, right, right. And I have to say there, there's also huge fatphobia in disability spaces. I have left disability spaces because they wanted to let people occasionally, like when they felt like it, talk about their intentional weight loss and have it be just like considered, um, overall neutral. Like any individual person could say that any individual other person could cheer them on and no moderators were going to say like, 'Hey, we don't, we don't talk, we don't do that here.' You know, as a value, as a moderator value, we don't allow that. They weren't going to do that. They were just like, "oh, well, it's up to them." And I was like, "I can't be here. Like, this is a disability community that I would love to be in, but I can't be here. If you're going to let people talk about intentional weight loss, like that's value neutral."

[01:07:36] **Caleb:** Yeah. Something that came up for me, Mikey, when you mentioned the statistic about, um, fat people with eating disorders waiting 13 years to get treatment—I just, I don't, I, I, we know that that's true or that number might be different, but that's true for fat people in a lot of instances, right? Uh, either they put off going to the doctor because of, uh, well, first of all, there was like the financial and class barriers to healthcare in the first place.

[01:08:06] **Caleb:** Second of all, there's the stigma of the fatphobia in the doctor's office and from the doctor. Um, and then third of all, when we even do try to seek treatment, we aren't always treated and are often just told to loss weight. And like, thinking about that as a disabling experience as well, the ways that the lack of care for our illnesses often leads to them progressing to the point that we become, um, more disabled, if not just disabled in general, when we didn't um, need to be. And also like I'm thinking about, you know, I had somebody in my life who is an infinifat and was developing a mobility disability, such that they needed a scooter and like just them expressing the anxiety of being an infinifat person on a scooter.

[01:09:02] **Tommy:** Yeah.

[01:09:02] **Caleb:** And like the sort of hostility that is directed to that figure in our culture and the fear of them taking it on, which is so legitimate. But I also

think about, you know, disabled people who talk about wheelchairs as access devices and opening up their lives. And I think that that's true. And so it's this like fucked up circular theme where like we can't access healthcare. We are disabled by fatphobia and then we also, um, can't or we, there are barriers for us to even like temper that experience, um, again, through fatphobia and it's just like such a fucked up cyclical thing.

[01:09:45] **Jordan:** And then there is also like fucked up assumption that like, as people who are like engaging in fat politics, that we don't like want to be treated for our medical things that come up, like? [Caleb begins to laugh] You know? Like I've experienced where like it's like, 'oh, well, like, because you choose to be fat, you are also choosing to be unhealthy. And so you're choosing to not...

[01:10:12] **Caleb:** You're non-compliant.

[01:10:13] **Jordan:** You're non-compliant. You are hostile. You're whatever. Like, I mean.

[01:10:17] **Tommy:** I'm not choosing a damn thing. I mean some people do. But yeah.

[01:10:21] **Jordan:** I, yeah, it's just so wild to me. And like, as someone who has been like really struggling with getting adequate medical treatment over the past two years now, like. It's just crazy to me because like, I, for instance, like with this—like I'm calling it a cyst but I actually don't even know if it is a cyst on my ovary. It could be a tumor or a fibroid or anything, but, but my insurance won't let me get a scan that will tell me what it is. Um, but that was something that I brought up to my doctors in July and they were like, "no, no, no, no, no. We don't think you have that. We don't think, we don't think you—that wouldn't impact your spine. That wouldn't impact your back. That wouldn't impact your walking." And now we're like, now we're in February and now it's suddenly, "oh, maybe it's this. Maybe it's, uh, maybe it's this mass that we found. That's super close to your spine." [laughs]

[01:11:21] **Jordan:** And it's just like the, like the... the complete disinterest in like listening to fat people about their, our bodies like that, like... that is because people think that we are noncompliant when really like the doctors are the ones who are non-compliant. Like the doctors are the ones who are not wanting to listen to us.

[01:11:46] **Tommy:** Right. It's like first, first, first do fat people harm.

[01:11:51] **Jordan:** Literally, literally.

[01:11:55] **Tommy:** And then, so I... and then if we suffer in our level of care due to all those types of medical discrimination that Caleb was mentioning, I do think it causes more disability over time and people that it might've been able to be preventable with, with some of the ones that would, that the people would want it to be prevented. Cause I'm not blanketing all disabilities in that. But then also if we die, that's when they mark it as, um, you know, you have these really high morbidity and mortality rates.

[01:12:31] **Mikey:** "You died due to obesity." [mockingly]

[01:12:34] **Tommy:** Right. And people dying should never be considered an unethical thing on the part of the person dying. Like that's just so preposterous. I can't even believe I'm saying it, but it is considered that way. Like you died. So you're a bad person. Like what?

[01:12:50] **Jordan:** No, totally. I mean, I feel like, I feel like I have been saying like this whole, this whole, last bit of my life. Like if I die, it was not my fault. Like. Like, I like have said that to my, my mom's specifically. Like, I have been like, like "I swear to God, like if I died, they better not say it was cause of obesity because like that shit, it would make me... I'd be haunting some people."

[01:13:17] **Tommy:** I mean, if I died, maybe I would, if, I don't know if I'd have a gravestone, but the gravestone could say "obesity is a slur".

[01:13:25] **Mikey:** I love it.

[01:13:26] **Jordan:** So true. Wow.

[01:13:30] **Mikey:** Oh my Lord. You know this whole time I've been thinking like... this is probably not the best conversation to have when I have a, an appointment with my new PCP next week.

[01:13:44] **Tommy:** No.

[01:13:44] **Jordan:** Or is it the best time to have this conversation?

[01:13:47] **Mikey:** And can I just say like... you know, with regard to ableism and how it collides with fatphobia. I mean, I... my journey into fat politics began really when I was an undergrad. Um, but I don't like to think that like I really started doing work until I became disabled. Because I think my, my fat politics really evolved once I, once I was physically disabled. And then I, after that is when I learned that I had ADHD. Um, so like I had to deal --and am still, am still dealing with, um, a lot of internalized ableism on my part, because I struggle to give myself the, for example, like the mobility devices that I need in order to like, live a more mobile life. Because.

[01:14:54] **Mikey:** I think in my head, I've always feared being that person who was so fat that they needed, that they were disabled because of it.

[01:15:03] **Tommy:** It's not your fault that you feared it too. You're getting 75 messages a day that that would make you a bad person.

[01:15:10] **Mikey:** Absolutely. I mean, I remember like, I forget...

[01:15:16] **Jordan:** Like at the end of Wall-E. You never seen it?

[01:15:20] **Mikey:** I've never seen it.

[01:15:22] **Tommy:** I refuse to see it because of the fatness things that I've heard about it.

[01:15:27] **Mikey:** Oh...

[01:15:27] **Jordan:** It's, really, really bad, but it's so explicit and like that's a kid's movie. And I've been like... part of me really wants to rewatch it, but I'm also like, oh, no you should not rewatch it.

[01:15:37] **Mikey:** Do we really need that kind of, that kind of pain for no reason? I mean, I remember like being young and going to like the grocery store with like my sister or my mom and seeing how people looked at very fat people who needed like, like scooters or whatever in order to get around. Like, I remember all of that. And I've always feared attracting that level of ire for no reason, just for existing, just for having the audacity to go to a grocery store and get food for myself.

[01:16:12] **Mikey:** Um, and so now I'm having to contend with a lot of internalized ableism on my part that is absolutely learned and everything, but



it's still there. Um, and a lot of internalized fatphobia as well. Um, and I also just want to state that. That, like, I am someone who actively, like who does fat liberation work. And I struggle with my fatphobia. Like I struggle with my internalized fatphobia and just like...

[01:16:38] **Jordan:** Yeah!

[01:16:38] **Mikey:** Because people think that like, once you start doing this work, you're just like this perfect person who like, like has no, has no issue, like not giving into stigmatizing, like ideas and feelings. And like, it's not true.

[01:16:56] **Tommy:** You mean a fake person?

[01:16:58] **Mikey:** Yeah!

[01:16:58] **Tommy:** A fictional person

[01:17:01] **Mikey:** Fictional. Like they don't exist.

[01:17:03] **Jordan:** I mean, that's what I was saying before, Mikey. Like it's so, and it hits you, like, does it, does it shock you? 'Cause to me I get so shocked, but maybe that's just because I think really highly of myself. [laughs]

[01:17:14] **Mikey:** No. I mean. [laughs] Like, I, I definitely, I definitely don't get shocked. Like my... like fatphobia is, besides myself hatred, which I think they probably bloomed at the same time, like those are my longest relationships.

[01:17:38] **Jordan:** Yeah.

[01:17:38] **Mikey:** So I'm never shocked when they rear their head. Right. Um, yeah. But it's like, people really think that I just like, don't struggle with my body. Like ever.

[01:17:50] **Jordan:** Oh, yeah. And because of that, people say the most triggering shit in front of us, too.

[01:17:54] **Mikey:** Yeah! Like, and, and you know what, and, and, you know, like, no, this isn't the fault of the person who sent me this, but somebody sent me something the other day that was like a survey for, um, like, like clothing

measurements, um, for like, it's like something that they're working on, um, for like extended sizes or whatever.

[01:18:14] **Jordan:** I think I got this same message.

[01:18:14] **Mikey:** And yeah. And I was just, and, and, you know, like no hate to that person, obviously. They, they didn't know, they didn't, they didn't understand what they were doing before they did it. But I was like, honestly, I can't fill this out because I'm in the middle of like a relapse for my ED [eating disorder]. Like I cannot do this.

[01:18:33] **Tommy:** I think also what comes in here is that stereotype of which people are allowed to be vulnerable.

[01:18:40] **Mikey:** Mm.

[01:18:40] **Tommy:** I mean, it is sort of like, you know... fat people are not considered to be vulnerable. And it's a, it's a it's, it's a cousin of, of, you know, that same stereotype being attached to other marginalized groups. The way Black people are not considered to be vulnerable, you know. Who gets more pain meds? Who is considered to be in pain, or in quote unquote "valid pain." Like. Because this thing about how, like, something could hurt us, you know, somebody sending you that survey could hurt you, but they're not thinking about your potential vulnerability.

[01:19:20] **Caleb:** Yeah. I, I really came to terms with this, like over... I mean, speaking of like fitphobia [laughs] like I... so the year 2020, I started off by like injuring myself at the gym. Um, right? And then I just like had this like huge chronic pain— chronic pain—chronic pain flare up that coincided also with the pandemic. And so I was like already having difficulty moving and then, um, in my house and then like had this added layer of fear, um, about leaving my house, um, that has produced like long-term effects.

[01:20:08] **Caleb:** Um, but I spent a lot of time over the pandemic, like learning how to treat my pain, my pain and my body better. And one of those things was getting, um, adaptive devices on my shoes. Uh, getting at soles, uh, additional soles added to the outsides of my shoes on my shorter leg. And that's something that, um, the doctors recommended when I became disabled in middle school, but I was already, so, um, I was already such a target, I could not, I felt like I could not take on any more stigmatizing traits and that I felt like doing that would make me more of a target. Um, and I finally did it last year

and like, the difference has been incredible and I'm like, oh my god, like I spent 20 years of my life in pain, being unable to move, like, just so that I wouldn't feel marked as disabled in my daily life.

[01:21:12] **Caleb:** But even when I went to pick up my shoes, um, I remember there was such an intense feeling of like shame and stigma and all this stuff, even though it's like barely noticeable to anybody, like nobody's commented on it. Um, I feel better. I move so much better. Um, I can't, I can barely tell, but it felt like such a huge deal. Um, and then when last semester we returned to in-person learning and I was thrust back into trying to navigate this gigantic hilly campus after essentially being inside for two years. And it was so hard on my body and I bought knee braces, um, because I was noticing that I had a lot of knee pain and my knees are really stiff and that it was like really impacting me. And it makes sense also because of my disability, because one of my legs is shorter than the other. And the other knee, has, uh, metal pins in it as a response to that, right? So like there are these larger issues that lead to my knee pain and whatever, but I bought these knee braces and they helped so tremendously.

[01:22:30] **Caleb:** Um, but it still took me so long to like, not feel shame about it and not feel stigma about it and not feel like it was because I was fat or whatever, or know that I was, if people saw me, they would think gets because I was fat, even though I go to the gym in my knee braces and I see thin people there in their knee braces and like... it's, nobody gives a fuck or whatever, or it's just like, 'oh, that person must have a bad knee,' or like, there's an alternate explanation other than the size of their body. Um, but I, I definitely still struggle with, and like, I it's taken me like, you know, time and, you know, some days are better than others. It's just like with fatness, you know? But of course we're so saturated with all of these systems that they're going to show up, regardless of the work that we've already done.

[01:23:18] **Tommy:** I'm glad that you have those assistive devices now, although I'm so sorry you didn't have them for so long, but.

[01:23:25] **Caleb:** Thank you. Yeah, me too. And it's like, that's like the part of the pain is like I spent 20 years of my life in pain. I was only hurting myself and literally hurting myself. And it feels, that was like when I had, it was like another one of those experiences. Like when I got home after my first season, the knee braces and I was in less pain, I had so much more energy. I was less tired. I was less depleted. And I was like, oh my god, is this what like, non-disabled people experience every single day? [Mikey starts laughing] Of course they can fucking

wake up at 6:00 AM and cook a full breakfast and, you know, have like all the energy in the world and shit. And that's just like, there were so many experiences in my life where I'm just like, I didn't even realize how much I was struggling.

[01:24:18] **Caleb:** Um, until I got some sort of support or a diagnosis or an aid that kind of like leveraged it. And I was like, holy fuck. "Why did I take it so personal?" Like I literally thought, like, I remember going to the doctor and being like, I want to wake up in pain every day. And she was like, "I'm sorry." and I was like, "wait, you don't? That's not, we're not all doing this? It's not just that I'm worse at dealing with this?"

[01:24:46] **Mikey:** No it really is just that some people don't struggle like this, and I've just begun to learn that in different areas of my life. Like, do you know, some people pay their bills without anxiety, any anxiety at all? Some people don't get to, some people don't have depression.

[01:25:06] **Jordan:** That's, that's... I don't know about that one.

[01:25:10] **Caleb:** Good luck with that.

[01:25:13] **Jordan:** I don't know, I had my first anxiety attack when I was like 12 years old. So like, I dunno, it really sounds fake to me.

[01:25:20] **Mikey:** I could not describe that experience for you, but like, oh my god... just on, I'm just thinking god, really, Caleb really, really got me thinking about just like... how much you get used to... feeling bad? How much you get used to like feeling pain, feeling rejection, expecting social rejection, expecting like bad things? And just like...

[01:26:01] **Jordan:** You expect the pain because of your fatness, when really the pain is from a disability.

[01:26:08] **Mikey:** I mean sometimes!

[01:26:09] **Jordan:** Sometimes. That was my experience. It's that like, I feel like for a long time, at least with my back stuff, I have felt like a lot of like the internalized fatphobia of like, 'oh, well, if I lost weight would this just go away?' And like, we all know probably most likely not, it would not go away. Um, but like, obviously, like when those are the messages that we're fed, like all the

time... that's where my brain goes, I don't know if your brain goes there, but my does.

[01:26:47] **Mikey:** I mean, my, my brain is, is there like 50% of the time.

[01:26:52] **Jordan:** Yeah.

[01:26:52] **Mikey:** Um, I mean, I think that's honestly... it's made rehabilitating my body so much harder because... I know that like, okay. I know that, that my brain is, my brain goes to that place where it's like, "well, maybe if I lose weight, you know, this will not be a problem anymore." and then I'm there. And then next thing, I know I'm exercising to lose weight. And the next thing I know, I'm into another fucking relapse.

[01:27:18] **Jordan:** Yeah.

[01:27:19] **Mikey:** And it's so scary. So it makes, it makes me afraid of getting to know my body again and, and like building strength and flexibility because, because I know that I'm not at the place yet where I can uncouple exercise from weight loss. Like I'm, I'm really not at that place yet. Um, and you know what, you know what something I just realized as we're talking? It's like the conversation about disability and fatness always defaults it, like always defaults to talking about disability, like physical disability specifically. And there's so much less attention paid to like... disabilities that are not about mobility or movement.

[01:28:08] **Jordan:** That's literally what I was going to talk about this whole time. Mikey. [Mikey laughs] I had a whole thing that I was going to say about that, and I forgot it until right now.

[01:28:17] **Mikey:** I mean it's because of fatphobia, but go ahead. Yeah. I want to hear it. [laughs]

[01:28:21] **Jordan:** So as we know, as I've said on almost every episode, I have borderline personality disorder. And I say it a lot because it's a very stigmatized disorder and I feel like it's really important to talk about. But, uh, truth be told if I was not fat, I would not have borderline personality disorder because I have borderline personality disorder because I was fucking traumatized as a child and in school. And I was bullied so horribly, so consistently, and it was

invalidated by all the adults in my life that I literally developed a fucking personality disorder.

[01:29:00] **Tommy:** So this goes back to Caleb was saying about how fatness can cause disability, not by the fat tissue.

[01:29:07] **Jordan:** Yes. Yes!

[01:29:08] **Tommy:** But by the way, we're treated in society.

[01:29:12] **Jordan:** Yes! I have a little, literal cluster B personality disorder. Not like, is like, it's just wild to me. Like if I, if I was not fat, I mean, yes. If I was not fat, I still could have developed BPD.

[01:29:27] **Jordan:** Like, yes, there are non-fat people who have BPD, but like mine,

[01:29:32] **Tommy:** They had some other trauma, though.

[01:29:34] **Jordan:** They had other trauma and like, yes, I have had other traumas in my life, but like, but it, to me, so directly correlates to the specific, just unrelenting trauma that was not only social or interpersonal, but also societal. And, and it was validated by obviously, like Ms. Michelle Obama and the time period that we grew up in.

[01:30:01] **Mikey:** Don't get me started. Do not get me started about Miss Michelle Obama.

[01:30:04] **Jordan:** No, no, no. [laughs]

[01:30:06] **Tommy:** Jordan, like, I want to say Jordan, like remember last week when Bryan rephrased like breaking furniture to like the

[01:30:16] **Mikey:** Breaking underneath you.

[01:30:18] **Tommy:** Right.

[01:30:18] **Jordan:** That is so true.

[01:30:20] **Tommy:** So I just want to say like, it should never have had to be like, if you weren't fat, this wouldn't have happened. It should have been like: if the

world were not fucking fatphobic trash, you could have been a fine little fat kid and why not?

[01:30:36] **Jordan:** That is so true!

[01:30:38] **Tommy:** Why not be a little fine little adorable fat kid? You know, what on earth is wrong with that?

[01:30:45] **Jordan:** It's so true. And it's just like, you know, I don't know. I love that I have BPD.

[01:30:54] **Jordan:** I think it makes me fun. It's the spice of life, you know, but it's just very interesting

[01:30:59] **Mikey:** A little seasoning. A lil personality seasoning.

[01:31:03] **Jordan:** Personality, seasoning some, you know, whatever. It's great. I love it. Balsamic vinegar. [pretending to be Elmo]

[01:31:14] **Mikey:** Okay, Elmo.

[01:31:15] **Jordan:** Elmo, anyone? [laughter] um, yeah, I don't know. It's so funny. I literally forgot that. I was thinking about that yesterday when we were, I was thinking about what we were going to talk about today. Um, so thank you for bringing that up, Mikey, because that was just like, it's a very, it's a it's, it's something that I do think about like a lot.

[01:31:40] **Mikey:** I mean, we don't, well, in general, we like, and I like to think about this, especially with relation to my ADHD. Like... we I think we expect for fat people to have depression. We expect for fat people to be sad.

[01:31:56] **Jordan:** Yeah.

[01:31:56] **Mikey:** Right? But we don't think about other forms of like mental illness or like— like I have ADHD. I am... I know now that like... well, not that I know now. I, I was always bored in school and I really struggled with that. And I, but nobody gave a shit because I was so good at policing myself. And also like... I over compensated because it's not only that I was fat, but that I was Black and that I was also a girl that like, like I, I went through puberty very young. And so if I didn't go out of my way to be a really good student, like... adults were just not interested in protecting me. They were not interested in

making sure I was okay. Um... and like, that was how I got people invested. That I did really well in class and I minded my business and I kept my messy shit on the playground and all that other stuff like... you know.

[01:33:19] **Tommy:** You should not have had to be earning any of that.

[01:33:21] **Mikey:** I shouldn't have.

[01:33:22] **Tommy:** You fucking deserve better. I'm just saying.

[01:33:25] **Mikey:** It's, it's, it's something that like— I didn't know that I deserved better until I started to rethink the things that I've experienced through the lens of my fatness and my race. And... I had ADHD this whole time. And nobody cared because I wasn't an overactive white boy doing badly in a classroom. Like. That is why no one gave a shit. And like I only found out because grad school fucked me up so bad that like, I literally could not mentally cope with my day-to-day life anymore. It was not possible. It was part of the, part of the reason why I took medical leave. It was like, I cannot be in school and deal with the way that my brain doesn't want to work with me right now.

[01:34:26] **Mikey:** And then to find out that like, I've always had this thing and like nobody cared for reasons that were very obvious. It was just like a kick in the teeth. Um, adults do not do right by fat kids. They do not. They especially don't do right by fat Black kids. Like I just, I get so angry sometimes about how I was failed by so many people in so many respects, at so many steps in my education. Especially, especially in the context of those adults constantly pushing me to, to do things academically that only reflected positively on them. And didn't really have anything to do with me. Like just, yeah,

[01:35:18] **Tommy:** You deserve better than all of that and that's, that's it. Like full-stop.

[01:35:26] **Bryan:** Hey, I'm back.

[01:35:28] **Tommy:** Hi Bryan.

[01:35:29] **Bryan:** For folks that were wondering where I was during the main discussion: I had the bop off to take care of some stuff, but everything is fine. No big deal.



[01:35:39] **Bryan:** I, most of my disability that I experienced is not because of my fatness. I experienced—actually, that's not true. I have to take that back. And here's why. For years I was told that I had ingrown hairs, uh, instead of hydradenitis. Like the, the medical establish was like, oh, well you just have an ingrown hair and it's because you're fat. And you know, if you lose weight, then you'll, you won't have that problem anymore.

[01:36:11] **Bryan:** And it turns out that, uh, I had hydradenitis. Did you know that the average time between somebody first having symptoms of HS and getting diagnosed with HS is seven years?

[01:36:23] **Jordan:** Wait that's wild. That's like the thing that I have. That's like, they don't, they, they don't catch it until you're like, for most people they don't catch it until you're fully blind. And they only caught it for me because I went into the ER like six times and I was like, I'm not leaving. I was like, I'm, uh, I'm not leaving. Sorry. You can tell me what's wrong with me or I'll be here forever.

[01:36:50] **Bryan:** Yeah. But, um, I experienced a lot of, I actually felt a lot of shame about my HS for a long time, because I didn't know what it was. And I would experience situations where, you know, I'd be at a conference and a boil would burst like in the middle of a conference and I'd be like sitting on some conference chairs. Like I remember I got up once and there was like a bloodstain on there. And like I had to like run to the bathroom and like, uh, and then I just literally didn't go to the rest of the conference for the weekend. 'Cause I was like, too ashamed and had no tools to like manage this. And it was another fat person, like on Facebook, saw me post about it. It was like, it could be this. And I had to go to the dermatologist and be like, look, I'm pretty sure it's this. And they're like, yeah, it's that. But if I hadn't gone and advocated for myself that wouldn't have happened.

[01:37:45] **Bryan:** Um, so I've definitely, you know, and now that I'm on medication for it, I don't have any problems. Like I rarely ever have any flare ups if I do they're small and I could have been living like this the whole time. Um, it was one of the reasons actually that I didn't work out. Because like I knew that like the more friction, the more sweat that you had the problem. And I didn't know, there was a way to address these two things.

[01:38:16] **Bryan:** Um, I think... and with ADHD, we've been doing a lot of conversation about ADHD here. And what I'll say is, uh, I experienced compounding impacts from my ADHD and my fatness because ADHD can often manifest as forgetting to put things away, your space being messy. Uh, you just

not being like, you know, rushing at the last minute to get out of the house, so you don't look quite as put together. And that plays right into the stereotypes of fat people and how we're looked at. And that people will be like, oh... like, so my ADHD will get hidden by people's anti-fatness. And, and so my disability in that way, interesting again. Like fatness is disabling in another way. Um, because my, my disability gets hidden. And so then I can't get the accommodations I need for my disability.

[01:39:30] **Tommy:** Right. Bryan, I, I relate to part of what you said. Like I don't, I don't happen to have ADHD, but I know that when I am first trying to explain my disability to people, they just see fatness. And it's like, there's this wall to get through before... if there's even any chance that they're going to hear, like I have this intense illness that is not about my fatness.

[01:39:58] **Tommy:** I mean, maybe it made me become fatter probably, but also I'm not on Star Trek: The Next Generation, so I don't know my alternate timeline. You know, maybe I'm fatter because of being sick and maybe not. But certainly having the illness has, is not being caused by being fat on any level. And, but I relate to that part you're saying like, it's hidden. People can't see it. They don't see it. They see a fat person, even when I'm in front of their face, trying to be like, here's the name of the illness. Here are 10 studies. Like it—it's blocked by their notions of fatness.

[01:40:40] **Bryan:** Yeah, absolutely. And it's probably a... like my boyfriend and I... sometimes I wonder if he, as again, like as—much work as you do to be like aware and, you know, and, um, a fat liberationist, when you're in a thin body, you can only do so much. And I say that because you are, you, you have been taught to privilege everybody over top of all this. You know, thin people just like left and right thinness. And so we went through a period where we were really struggling for him to like understand my ADHD.

[01:41:26] **Bryan:** And I wonder if part of that was like latent stereotypes that he carried about fat people. Um, and I don't know, he and I haven't had that conversation, but, um... the two play into each other so much. Um, I just, again, as you pointed out, Mikey, the number of fat kids and especially the number of fat Black kids who don't get diagnosed because they aren't—because people attribute, uh, their, their disability to something else, something else social, because they're like, oh, I have this stereotype of this person. You know, you know, that they just totally get missed. Um, and I do wonder too, how often my parents, even my parents, I wonder, like my parents thought giving me

medicine for my ADHD would solve the problem. And it probably solved the outward problem, right?

[01:42:24] **Bryan:** Like the itself, the parts of the problem. But then everything else was, you know, got wrapped in this, like sort of, "why do you want to spend so much time on the computer? You know, why don't you go out and do more thing?" And my dad tried to get me to play every sport known to man. And, you know, that's why I say every gay kid has played soccer. Um, you know, I played baseball and I was on the only team that didn't have a real team name. Like everybody else was named after a real team and we were the Lancers. [laughs]

[01:42:58] **Mikey:** The Lancers!? [laughs]

[01:42:59] **Bryan:** With these really cute powder blue jackets. It was so cute. Um, yeah. So, you know, I really do. I think, identify with that. My, my fatness itself has not been, um, like my fatness itself has not been disabling to this point. Um, but I have learned, again, it's all the intersections. Because my core strength is not very good because I, because I didn't know that you could like work out and not do it for not losing weight.

[01:43:38] **Bryan:** And so now I'm doing physical therapy to like work on my core strength and I have this amazing physical therapist who's like a fat Black lady. And, uh, she also does it over, like over zoom. So I don't even have to like see her. I will send you all her information.

[01:43:55] **Mikey:** I am extremely jealous.

[01:43:57] **Bryan:** She's amazing. She's amazing. Um, Dr. Toro Victor. I mean, she does, I'm like, and it's just been... it's so helpful to have somebody. Physical therapists, like here's what I didn't realize. And maybe, I don't know how many of them are like this, but my little brother in my fraternity is also a physical therapist and he's like, he's a circus performer. He like, he, he is like, he is quote unquote— —he's thin. He's thin and has muscles.

[01:44:29] **Bryan:** He has been one of the only people who's like never had a bad thing to say about fat people. And I wonder if it's because physical therapy, folks who are physical therapists spend so much time around non-normative bodies that they— —specifically like in training. I think that's the part of it too, that like, they, they're always, I mean, and also his work was specifically with like elderly people who are like that, you know, it like helps burn a lot of that

away and give you a different view into things, um, that helps us sort of define a level of, you know, that like helps remove some of those blinders or some of that like systemic oppression from just you thinking that's the way it should be. I don't know.

[01:45:24] **Jordan:** I think that's probably true. Cause I feel like I've noticed something similar.

[01:45:29] **Mikey:** I don't know about the physical therapist thing, because I've had really negative experiences so far with, at least with the ones in Rhode Island, because this is the only place I've gotten physical therapy in. But I don't know. Um,

[01:45:43] **Jordan:** When you go in, I have a question.

[01:45:45] **Mikey:** Yeah.

[01:45:46] **Jordan:** Actually everyone can answer this question cause I have my, like my like, uh, my "practice" when I see a new doctor of like, just like a first thing out of my mouth or like first five things out of my mouth are going to be like, "I am not going to lose weight. And that is not something that is possible for my body. Nor is it something that I'm interested in." Like do you all do that or is that just me? Cause I always wonder if that impacts the way that I am treated.

[01:46:20] **Tommy:** Done it with a nutritionist and it worked.

[01:46:25] **Bryan:** I've told you all the story about what happened with my doctor, who, like I told him, I didn't want anything about weight loss and he still tried to put weight loss pills on me.

[01:46:34] **Mikey:** Yes.

[01:46:34] **Jordan:** Well, of course. I mean, a lot of them do that, for sure. Yeah.

[01:46:38] **Mikey:** I've done it with physical therapists and both of mine have sucked. So like, uh, maybe that has something to do with them sucking or, you know, I don't know. I don't know, because like... one of my best friends is currently trading to be a physical therapist and I love him. Hi Kevin. I love you.

[01:47:01] **Jordan:** Hi Kevin.

[01:47:03] **Mikey:** And like, I don't know. I don't... he's great, but like the ones I've met not great.

[01:47:12] **Tommy:** Um, I was really, really honored to be here.

[01:47:15] **Mikey:** Thank you so much for coming.

[01:47:17] **Tommy:** Thank you very much for having me. Um, if, if anyone listening wants to find me, my Twitter is @tommyinboots. My Patreon is tommywearsboots, and it's just once a month post about, uh, identifying fatphobia.

[01:47:39] **Bryan:** This information will all be in the show notes as well.

[01:47:42] **Tommy:** Okay cool. Thank you all extremely for having me. I'm very, very honored to be here.

[01:47:49] **Mikey:** Thank you for coming.

[01:47:51] **Bryan:** We need to explain to you all that this call has gone almost for three hours. Oh, that's because I know that's because I started in advance with Tommy

[01:48:02] **Mikey:** ohhh okay.

[01:48:03] **Bryan:** Still, probably two and a half hours

[01:48:04] **Mikey:** My QuickTime recording is at two hours. [laughs]

[01:48:07] **Bryan:** Yeah. Y'all this is a mega-sode. Not a mini-sode but a mega-sode.

[01:48:12] **Jordan:** Leave us a review on Apple Podcasts, email us your questions and thoughts and feedback, but preferably only nice stuff [laughter] at [unsolicitedFTB@gmail.com](mailto:unsolicitedFTB@gmail.com) and follow us on Instagram and Twitter @UnsolicitedFTB. And until next time...

[01:48:38] **Mikey:** Watch your mouth!