

TBT 5

[00:00:00] **Dana:** Hi, everybody. This is Dana, and I'm here with Hilary.

[00:00:04] **Hilary:** Hello there. Hello, hello.

[00:00:06] **Dana:** And Sirius. Hey, everybody. And we are here to record this episode on families and boundaries and holidays and how do we hold our ground? How do we hold our ground when the siren song of the weight loss and cosmetic fitness industries are loud and we are spending time with our chief weight stigmatizers?

[00:00:32] **Dana:** That's a term that Shelby Gordon, who's in our Body Trust Certification community coined this term, Chief Weight Stigmatizer. And this idea that when we spend time around our chief weight stigmatizers, we're likely to be very activated and have a hard time holding our ground in what we know and believe is right for us.

[00:00:58] **Dana:** One of the first things I just wanted to mention is that when we're newer to this work, this time of year can be really hard to navigate. There's such a seductive nature, seductive quality to the advertising around how the new year is going to be different. And when our roots are shallow in body trust, coming back to the roots metaphor, the deeper your roots and body trust.

[00:01:27] **Dana:** The more solid you feel in this work, when you're newer to this work and you have more shallow roots, it just takes one strong gust of fat phobia to, to kind of lift you up and out of this work and put you back on another weight loss plan. Or at least to feel a strong pull to go back to the status quo that is weight loss and diet culture.

[00:01:50] **Dana:** So we were recording this knowing that many of us are going into a time of year. Where we're around people that make this work really hard. And I'm just going to say it. Because it feels like it's right to say, we've just had the election here in the United States and the outcome is, is pretty is very devastating. And so some of us are also going home for the holiday and spending time with people who voted this person.

[00:02:22] **Dana:** So there's another layer there. We're going to try not to get too pulled off of that. And it feels really hard to name, not to name it. Because that is a layer here. I'm guessing some of you will not be going to spend time with

your families, and that's one of your choices is you just don't do it anymore, especially if they can't respect your boundaries.

[00:02:45] **Sirius:** Yeah. Yeah. I mean, this is a, I think that the last decade, give or take, in the last decade or two. American context have really tested the boundaries of families, [00:03:00] family gatherings and those kinds of connections that are supposed to be automatic, all of a sudden get really tossed up in the air in our current political climate.

[00:03:12] **Sirius:** And I think that that is 1 dynamic at play, but there's this other dynamic of play, which is the 1 we're here to talk about, which is sort of existed beyond and outside of that. And for the folks who are challenged with both, with their families, what a tough spot. What a tough spot. Yeah.

[00:03:33] **Hilary:** Dread out there. There's another piece coming up for me, which is that we know the insidious nature of disordered eating and eating disorders and the body change industry is that when we, when there's a bunch of other Shit going on that we can't control that it's really harder to stay away from you know making from dieting and from the body project from wanting to have something to control and I think when you're faced with going home and and and waves of hate or disregard and then and then fatphobia gets folded in there, of course, too that it's That you want to feel like you can protect yourself in one way or another.

[00:04:23] **Hilary:** So that's kind of what we're going to be talking about today, but we want to acknowledge that you might be really struggling with your disordered eating as a way of coping right now. And we just get it. We totally get it. And, in body trust work, we're honoring all the ways we have of coping as wise as rooted in wisdom, even though some of them feel shittier than others.

[00:04:48] **Dana:** Think many of us come from lineages of harm when it comes to bodies many of us have endured lots of harmful rhetoric around food bodies and fatness. That we know our first socialization happens in the home. And so some of our earliest beliefs about people and difference start in the home.

[00:05:13] **Dana:** And what we're hearing our families say and family gatherings are something that happen. At the end of the year holidays tend to holidays and celebrations tend to revolve around food. Because that's what human beings do. We celebrate, we grieve through food. This, we, we are not, Body Trust is not about looking at food and dumbing it down into its nutritional components.

[00:05:45] **Dana:** It's really honoring that food is a part of our history, our culture, our heritage. And there's a meaning to food. that if we just say it's food is just about nutrition, we are missing the [00:06:00] mark. And Sirius, I know you wanted to talk a little bit about just this time of year and why we why we gather.

[00:06:09] **Sirius:** Yeah, I do think it's important to remember some of the bigger context that Around the world, many cultures gather in the darkest time of the year and that may be at a little bit of a different time of year, depending on where you are in the world, but the fact that we gather together when it's dark, When we can be together to create warmth to celebrate the end of the year, the beginning of the new year, to celebrate the end of the harvest and et cetera, we're in this period of time where sort of throughout human history, humans have come together for safety, warmth, celebration, to honor what is lost, to honor our dead, uh, to honor our ancestors.

[00:06:55] **Sirius:** These are themes that we see. Around the world, across cultures and to sort of bring them into the modern era and sort of bring them into particularly a Western context or American context to be in this moment of celebration and community with your, with your family, with your people and to then be confronted with food shaming, difficult political conversations.

[00:07:23] **Sirius:** And don't forget the regular family drama because that's always going to be part of any family gathering. I think it puts people in incredibly vulnerable situations that are not in alignment with what this time of year is supposed to be and represent. If we weren't clouded by modern inconveniences and systemic oppression.

[00:07:47] **Hilary:** I just keep thinking about how it's all dominance, right? Dominance and control.

[00:07:56] **Hilary:** Now we've gotten to a place when we sit with our people that much better versed in how to disconnect from others and push than To actually try to do connection like the relational skill of most of our people is so, so poor.

[00:08:15] **Dana:** Yeah, it makes me think of this TSA layman quote that I pulled. Yes. KSA layman is the author of the book heavy and several other amazing works. One of my favorite authors at the moment. And Kiyose wrote on his Facebook, families can't talk about cycles of abuse, addiction, or generational lies, but we love to talk about the weight gain of the person that's not in the room.

[00:08:47] **Dana:** Trippin hard. Love doesn't look or act like this. But that's not what love looks like or acts like. We can't talk about [00:09:00] shit, anything real. Let's just dance around the big elephant in the room. But as soon as somebody is out of the room, we're going to say, I think they've gained weight. Did they gain weight?

[00:09:14] **Dana:** This is not what love looks like.

[00:09:17] **Hilary:** No. Or being recruited into conversations about other people's bodies. That you would never want to be a part of, or plan to be a part of.

[00:09:27] **Sirius:** Now, this brings up a question for me.

[00:09:30] **Speaker 6:** Mm

[00:09:31] **Sirius:** hmm. Now, I'm Black, and Black people aren't a monolith by any means. Uh, and many BIPOC communities aren't a monolith by any means.

[00:09:43] **Sirius:** But a lot of my friends of color have aunties, Or cousins or people in the family who will just talk to them directly, uh, ask them inappropriate questions very directly. Are, are you sure you won't be putting more of that on your plate? Oh, are you gonna have seconds?

[00:10:04] **Speaker 6:** You,

[00:10:06] **Sirius:** I saw you have some cake already, baby.

[00:10:08] **Sirius:** You sure you need some more cake? Or, they will ask questions about, are you pregnant, and then that leads to a whole conversation about the body that I think can be uncomfortable on multiple levels. And so I guess my question is, so in white families, do people not ask direct questions? Is it sort of this behind the back conversation?

[00:10:27] **Sirius:** Like, how does that

[00:10:28] **Hilary:** work? I mean, I think some do, but a lot of it is like little Underhanded zingers, or a little, like, little helpful statements that things, like, uh, I don't know. You said little, you

[00:10:47] **Speaker 3:** said little helpful statements, and I was like, Kanaeby sarcasm. That was kidding. I know.

[00:10:53] **Speaker 3:** I was thinking about,

[00:10:55] **Hilary:** Hanging out with my mom yesterday and her zingers.

[00:10:57] **Hilary:** She was like, Hey, I just got this new wet dry vacuum. And it works really good. I can bring it over sometime. And I was like, my house is really clean right now because you were coming over. So I told her, yeah. Anyway. So, it's more like that. That's how it worked in my family. Uh, it's like either little, like little things that get you at the end or talking about people like they're not in the room.

[00:11:32] **Hilary:** It was also an omission. There was a lot of, by omission, like if you come home for the holidays and grandma says you look great, it means you're smaller. But if nobody says anything to your face, it means you don't look that great to them. So there's a lot of hidden communication. That's correct.

[00:11:52] **Hilary:** I would say. Dana comes from a little bit more of a direct family, but I don't know if we don't There's

[00:11:59] **Dana:** some [00:12:00] dot I would say it's more like what happens in my families is more like Diet talk that's insidious in the culture and it's not really directed at anyone in particular. I do think if they're going to talk about somebody's changing body, they'll do it on the, on the, on the down low, they'll say it when, they'll debrief on the car on the way home.

[00:12:27] **Dana:** And say, I think she may be gained weight.

[00:12:29] **Dana:** But they won't do it in front of somebody. They'll make disparaging comments about their own bodies, potentially. And they'll, they'll, they'll say things that are in the realm of diatalk, but it's not so pointed. It's not so like, you sure you want to have another piece of that?

[00:12:48] **Dana:** That stuff doesn't happen in life.

[00:12:50] **Sirius:** The thing that I have certainly observed in my family, other Black families and some other communities, is the use of humor in this context. And that I think is, is difficult too, because it puts you in a position where You have to laugh at the joke, too, right?

[00:13:15] **Sirius:** If you, if you don't participate in that, then you're, you're the problem. But then the alternative is to participate in your own humiliation. And, and as we know, so many fat folks develop skills around humor as a deflection tool, as a way of bringing, quote unquote, bringing it up first, uh, as a way to, own it so that it can't be made fun of by other people.

[00:13:46] **Sirius:** And I know that holidays are a part of, of learning that skill set. I'm just imagining the amount of quote unquote big back comments that folks are going to be experiencing and certain family gatherings over the next couple of months. And how challenging that can be.

[00:14:08] **Hilary:** Yeah. Because I think that leads us up to, what happens if you push back or set a boundary. And I think in a lot of families, that also means like, what does that mean about you? What does that mean about how I've hurt you or bothered you or what's going on for you? Right.

[00:14:28] **Dana:** Yes, it makes me think of clients in the past who that was one thing we worked on was, the, the naming of their like they would name their fatness. They would make a joke in relation to their fatness to be like, I'm I know I'm fat. You don't need to tell me you. We don't need to go there. Like, I'll, I'll just do it for for everybody and just.

[00:14:53] **Dana:** just unpacking that a bit can be really helpful.

[00:14:57] **Speaker 7:** I

[00:14:58] **Sirius:** mean, I, I know that's not [00:15:00] what we're here to talk about today, but that that it's a, it's a, again, a defense mechanism of fat people naming their fatness and using it as a humorous deflection tactic, uh, is a really difficult dynamic that I think a lot of fat really need to think about and unpack.

[00:15:21] **Sirius:** For a lot of reasons. And, oh boy, it, it's a, it's very good armor, but we have to start thinking about why we needed the armor in the first place.

[00:15:32] **Speaker 5:** hmm

[00:15:32] **Speaker 5:** Mm hmm.

[00:15:34] **Dana:** so, a big piece of navigating the holidays and holding your ground is to give some thought to This is probably one of the main areas of boundary work. Boundaries are not something that many of us do easily. Some

of us, are allowed to have boundaries more than others. And when we haven't set boundaries with people there, they will have a reaction when we do, and that reaction doesn't mean that our boundaries aren't valid or important or necessary.

[00:16:18] **Dana:** If you have a narcissist in your family that you're trying to set a boundary with, they will go to the wounded one so quickly. Right? Like, Oh, you're wounding me. I'm so hurt by your, and I won't say it. I'm like, I'm so hurt by your boundary. They don't say that, but they play like the wounded one. Oh, how could you talk to me that way?

[00:16:42] **Dana:** Right?

[00:16:46] **Dana:** So when you think about boundaries, Hillary, I feel like you are, you wrote about boundaries in the book. So of course, I think of boundaries. The things you know about boundaries, , and I also think about Princess Hemphill's quote, that boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously.

[00:17:11] **Dana:** Boundaries are the distance at which I can love you and me simultaneously.

[00:17:19] **Dana:** A great boundary is to just not give people access to you on social media. I have, I have blocked many older white male relatives because they don't respect my boundaries when I've asked them to stop commenting on my posts. And I've said you can't do this, so you don't get access to me on this platform anymore.

[00:17:42] **Dana:** And one of the reasons I'm doing this is because the next time I see you, I won't punch you in the fucking face. I would like to see you and actually have some good feelings towards you. And if this continues, the only thing I'm going to want to do [00:18:00] is smack you when I see you. And I'd prefer not to feel that way when I see you, so you're out.

[00:18:07] **Dana:** You don't get access to me anymore. They don't like it.

[00:18:14] **Hilary:** No, I mean, I think that's what has a lot of folks. Not setting boundaries is, it feels like a choice between further othering or alienating themselves, especially in families or doing what they've done a lot of, which is put up with a bunch of shit and get through it.

[00:18:34] **Hilary:** And I think when we come into doing like body trust work, we're coming into this, this agency. Where we're saying, uh, diet culture has not

been benign in my life. Fat phobia has not been benign or light in my life. And we say that that counts, that that's our truth, regardless of whether other people get it or believe it.

[00:19:06] **Hilary:** And that sucks. I think a lot of us engage in diet culture to try to circumvent or mitigate the impacts of fat phobia and to, to Try to get regain a sense of belonging that's been, threatened or removed from us because of our body sizes or what we've been taught to believe about our body size.

[00:19:29] **Hilary:** So

[00:19:32] **Hilary:** that's a big deal, to go into these settings and say no. And I just want to also say it's a big deal not to like you, you don't have to be the one to absorb all that sucks. But you are, I, I recognize that you're choosing between someone's, but her reaction and, and your agency, and maybe it's, maybe it's worthwhile to think about how many times those things get put pitted against you, how many times those choices leave you out, or end up feeling like self abandonment instead of protection, or both.

[00:20:15] **Hilary:** Right, protection and self love. You deserve to have boundaries, and anyone who's watching you or hearing you set a boundary benefits from knowing that's an option, so even though it might feel like you're hanging out there on your own, if other ears are listening, they will process it, however they process it.

[00:20:40] **Hilary:** And in order to heal and be free and have more freedom and liberation, we cannot wait for permission. For that. That's not coming. So permission to leave, live outside of diet culture is not coming from your loved ones, most likely. [00:21:00] And, permission to be yourself and set these boundaries and stay in relationship, is not coming.

[00:21:10] **Hilary:** And unless you wear that Prentice Hemphill quote on a t shirt at the holiday season, which I actually really would recommend people aren't going to know where you're coming from with boundaries. It's. But when we tell people where our limits are, it is a bid for connection, not to end the relationship or not to be mean to them.

[00:21:34] **Hilary:** And if you can set a boundary, you can also say that, right? You can say, I'm saying this because I love you and I want to stay close to you, but this stuff hurts me and it's not okay and we can't do it

[00:21:48] **Speaker 6:** anymore.

[00:21:50] **Hilary:** But it, it just flips everything on its head around how I've been conditioned to be in relationship.

[00:21:59] **Hilary:** We were not, we weren't, in, in parts of my family, there's, there's a very strong Italian American part where we say things more directly, but the other side that's way more Stepford wifey is it's just, don't rock the boat. Be a bitch behind everyone's back, right? Really, really, really harmful, really, really insidious.

[00:22:22] **Hilary:** And all of this protects them from having to face the fact that they live in a world where not everyone's like them, including the people around their table. And that we can handle difference. We can learn to tolerate difference,

[00:22:43] **Hilary:** and that that's where relationship actually grows. So much of what we do with each other is about, is about enforcing sameness. Relationally, and so I want you to think about how maybe this could be an invitation to reaffirm affirming difference and staying in relationship when possible,

[00:23:05] **Sirius:** Hillary, you're, you're reminding me of some of the things I talk about in my work when I talk about interruptions, particularly interruptions of oppressive, problematic, microaggressive behavior. And there's a, there's a really difficult calculus being played at all times around interruptions and when to do it and not to do it.

[00:23:30] **Sirius:** And I think there's a similar dynamic at play. And one of the things that I often talk about or remind people of is that you have to think about like, what is the relationship? What is, how much does relationship matter to you? And what are the right? If this is someone who you love, who loves you. And you want to continue to be in relationship with them, then it's worth the risk to set the boundary.

[00:23:58] **Sirius:** If that's not necessarily [00:24:00] what's happening in that dynamic, and this is an easier conversation when we're talking about co workers or strangers or whatever, but when you start talking about friends and family, if you're engaging with a friend or family member who you actually don't really care about that much, and maybe you're not that close.

[00:24:18] **Sirius:** And then is it, is it worth it to get into that with the whole thing? I don't know. And, and I think there again, even there, there's nuance in their ways to engage with it. Like, do you have a full conversation with them

about their growth potential and why you're trusting them with this information? No, but you could also just gray rock them.

[00:24:39] **Sirius:** Right? Like, like, like you could, you could set the boundary without, without it being placed on like trust and mutual love and respect. It could also be like, you're being a dick and I'm not even going to dignify that with a response.

[00:24:53] **Hilary:** Yeah. We should probably mention what gray rock means. Yeah.

[00:24:56] **Sirius:** I actually, I don't know what that means.

[00:24:58] **Sirius:** I think I'm using it appropriately in context. So please educate me and everyone,

[00:25:03] **Hilary:** I mean, it's come out of a lot of a lot of rhetoric around narcissism, which is, certainly taken hold interesting since 2016. But but people who do a lot of work around narcissism recommend that the way to, To cut off narcissistic supply, to the way to frustrate the fuck out of a narcissist, but also protect your energy is to essentially go gray rock, which means that you're like a gray rock in their life, right?

[00:25:33] **Hilary:** You're just there kind of hanging out like all the other gray rocks, not particularly recognizable, not fueling their stuff, not. Not reacting to their stuff. You're just kind of getting yourself out of view. It takes a little while, but I love that analogy. For a while Dana and I had a gray rock symbol.

[00:26:01] **Hilary:** At times, at times in our work, we were like, you can't see us, but we're making ourselves like

[00:26:07] **Speaker 3:** rocks.

[00:26:07] **Hilary:** Everybody to the rock!

[00:26:11] **Speaker 3:** Like a seated child's pose almost, like, oh,

[00:26:14] **Sirius:** yeah. It looks a little more like hamster or lemming or like some sort of little creature than rock. I get it.

[00:26:25] **Hilary:** Yeah, yeah. Yeah, it's hard on zoom to do the full rock.

[00:26:29] **Hilary:** But Also, we need, is there, is there a rock emoji? That would be super helpful. I can't remember if there is.

[00:26:37] **Speaker 3:** There probably is, yeah.

[00:26:40] **Hilary:** So go in gray rock.

[00:26:41] **Sirius:** It's gray. There's a gray rock

[00:26:45] **Speaker 3:** emoji. There it is. And it is gray.

[00:26:50] **Hilary:** I thought there was, I wasn't sure. Do you think it's shown up? 2016.

[00:26:55] **Speaker 6:** That

[00:26:56] **Hilary:** emoji. Interesting.

[00:26:58] **Hilary:** Anyway, that's gray [00:27:00] rock, right? So you can go gray rock. If you can't make a declaration, that's your best net next, but

[00:27:08] **Dana:** yeah, the question that's been helpful from our mentors and trainers when we're navigating conflict is, what do I need this, my relationship with this person to be at the end of the conversation?

[00:27:26] **Speaker 6:** What

[00:27:26] **Dana:** do I need or want my relationship with this person to be at the end of this conversation? Because how I choose to. handle the fatphobic comments or whatever's happening will be different based on that. Like what I say to somebody at a party who's saying really harmful shit about people's bodies that are in the room and I'm never going to see them again.

[00:27:50] **Dana:** I could say whatever the hell I want to that person, but to somebody that I'm going to see weekly for three years, or you may have a boss that you're navigating a conversation, like the way we enter a conversation. Depends on what and if we do and what we say, right, really, that has a, that's a great guidepost to be thinking.

[00:28:14] **Dana:** What do I want my or need my relationship to be?

[00:28:18] **Sirius:** And I, Dana, I think to that point, like they're, they're again, there's a calculus. And every relationship deserves its own sort of like thoughtful consideration about is this worth it or not. I've, I've joked with both of you about my grandfather who is 99, just turned 99 in the summertime.

[00:28:36] **Sirius:** There are many things about my life that he does not know and he will never know, including my profession, right? Like, and, and that's a lot to do with who he is and where he is in his life. Would it be worthwhile for me to get into any kind of argument with my 99 year old grandfather? Probably not. And so the boundary there is to just not engage, keep it light, keep it surface.

[00:28:59] **Sirius:** Let's talk about the, your grant, your great grandchild, whatever it is, but there are other people for whom the conversation is much more important, whether it goes positive or negative, we're going to have to have it. Yeah.

[00:29:13] **Hilary:** Yeah. I just have a full coming into mind. Like what it, what it means to, when we're doing this around body size, for instance, what, what does it mean to have conversations, a fat person is a thin person.

[00:29:25] **Hilary:** Or a person that, passes or has a thin privilege, even if you don't feel then is really different. Yeah.

[00:29:35] **Dana:** Yeah. So that's another question that we can sometimes ask is like, is this my labor to be doing, like, if I'm. I'm an average sized person in the room, and somebody is saying fat phobic comments, and there's ten fat people in the room.

[00:29:48] **Dana:** I should be the one to say, Hey, what you're saying is not, is harmful, and is impacting people in this room. It's not the fattest person to, to say that. [00:30:00] To disrupt it just like it's my job as a white person to disrupt the racism my job is depending on our, our social location and our identities that is one factor to consider as we're, as we're thinking about what feedback to give and how to give it and if it's ours to do.

[00:30:21] **Dana:** I wanted to say to that, white supremacy has us. We are not just afraid of conflict, we are conflict avoidant because of white supremacy and the fact that we avoid conflict is one of the reasons why white supremacy thrives in our culture, and it is a really big mind fuck to see conflict as generative.

[00:30:48] **Dana:** Right? And that is something that I have had to lean on as a human, as a colleague, as a friend, as a facilitator, as a leader, is that conflict is generative. It can be generative. And part of what we are doing in Body Trust work is we are reclaiming our agency and our voice, something that has been robbed and stolen from us in our disembodiment, in our fragmentation.

[00:31:16] **Dana:** We are easier to control when parts of us are fragmented. We have lost our agency and we have lost our voice. And so when I set this boundary with, with my uncle, it's super uncomfortable, uh, because of my socialization. And I also think I am saying to you the thing that probably 10 women in our family wanted to say to you, and I'm the one who's finally saying enough of your shit.

[00:31:49] **Dana:** You don't get to have a relationship with me and be like that. Not on social media. I'll have a relationship with him when I see him in person, which is like every 15 years, but uh, nope. And I think about that. That's the women in my family have put up with shit because they have been robbed of their agency and they've chosen comfort over conflict.

[00:32:17] **Dana:** And I keep thinking about something you said serious about these, these, this time of year and how celebrations were, we, we, we were seeking safety and warmth and connection and celebration. And I'm guessing like, as people listen to this podcast. Those are not the words that they would use to describe these holiday gatherings.

[00:32:43] **Dana:** There's,

[00:32:44] **Speaker 3:** there's so much safety and warmth. Some do, and there are probably moments of that, and there are pockets of that in these gatherings. And those are the people to go spend your time with. Mm-Hmm. Where are you gonna sit

[00:32:58] **Dana:** at the table? Don't sit next [00:33:00] to the chief weight stigmatize, sit at the kids' table if you have to.

[00:33:04] **Dana:** Right? But like, that is something we're thinking about because comfort, uh, safety warmth, celebration.

[00:33:11] **Speaker 5:** Mm-Hmm. .

[00:33:13] **Sirius:** I, A lot of thoughts going through my mind. I'm not sure where to begin, but. What you were saying about sort of white supremacy

culture and the way that it, uh, does not value conflict at all. I think the, the related piece of that from white supremacy culture is the not wanting to be just uncomfortable, right?

[00:33:39] **Sirius:** The, the discomfort is not something that is at all acceptable. And. This connection between conflict and being uncomfortable is something that white supremacy culture tells us, like, we do not need to engage with at all, like why we can avoid both of those things. So let's do that. And I think that so much of our culture, capital C culture, is rooted in that.

[00:34:09] **Sirius:** In a lot of ways. And so things like manners, politeness, social mores, those are all sort of based on ideas around not causing other people to be uncomfortable and minimizing conflict. And those are. Those family gatherings, depending on what your family is like, can be the place where those manners and social mores and being polite.

[00:34:34] **Sirius:** Those are the most important things. Those are the things that you have to perform at all times when you're with certain, certain kinds of family. Even in my own family, one side of family that was much more important than the other side. And it was, you could feel the difference.

[00:34:56] **Dana:** Well, and I just find myself thinking about the family members that, lean into that and like want everyone to do that. And then they're, they're the one at the table after a couple of drinks, poking at everybody, saying the shit that they don't want anyone else to say. But now that I've had a couple of drinks, let me stir the pot.

[00:35:14] **Dana:** That's my family, they don't talk about bodies and stuff, but somebody is going to throw out some jab at like our political views or something. And they'll be the one to eat. We should be polite. And can we all get along? And then they're the ones like, let me poke the bear.

[00:35:37] **Speaker 3:** So,

[00:35:37] **Dana:** we may want to leave. Wrap this, uh, episode up with some recommendations for folks, like giving people some thoughts on how, how do they handle this. Like, you may find yourself wanting to talk to people about body trust and how do we talk to people about body trust? That's one thing I [00:36:00] thought we might offer a couple of ideas there.

[00:36:03] **Dana:** And then you're just sometimes your decisions might, you may just decide not to go, or to go for the first hour before everyone's been in

their cups and then leave before the shit hits the fan. When aunties had, her fourth glass of wine and isn't going to respect any boundaries and start poking.

[00:36:25] **Dana:** at people.

[00:36:31] **Dana:** I believe in chosen family. We, many of us were raised in families that really, were nuclear and, and like, I spend a lot of holidays with chosen family in part because I don't have family that lives near me. But many have chosen families. That are much more supportive places, places where you can experience safety, warmth, connection, celebration.

[00:37:04] **Dana:** And if people can't respect your boundaries, What they're saying is they don't care about you. And so then your decision is, do I go and just know that they're not going to respect my And that may be your decision. Or your decision is, I'm not coming.

[00:37:23] **Dana:** I'm going to go hang out with my friends. Where I know I'm not going to have to experience any of this. Or I'd rather be alone in a movie theater. And we,

[00:37:34] **Hilary:** we have to, we have to weather the, the grief that comes from knowing that no matter what, they may not get you, whether you set the boundary and share or you don't, they may not rise to meet you.

[00:37:48] **Hilary:** And that is not about you, but it may bring out big feelings in you and previously in your life and relationships that may have meant that you try to make yourself better in some kind of way or more palatable in some kind of way. But there you, you can change all kinds of things and that is not going to bridge that divide.

[00:38:15] **Hilary:** Some people are not going to get it and we grieve that.

[00:38:21] **Hilary:** We grieve as a way of letting go. Or just, the grief work I do is, is rooted in the work of Tom, uh, Francis Weller who wrote, The book I title I can never hold

[00:38:36] **Dana:** the gates of grief, wild edge of sorrow. Well,

[00:38:39] **Hilary:** he's responsible for the gates of grief of the wild edge of sorrow is the book anyway. And lots of those gates that we're all passing through are like, that there's parts of us that have never known love and the, the

somersaults and things that we do in order to remedy that don't necessarily
[00:39:00] remedy that.

[00:39:01] **Hilary:** And that instead we learn to be with the fact that not all parts of us will or have known love. We also grieve that everything we love we're going to lose. And I think with these relationships, it's like, are we going to lose them when the person passes away? Are we going to lose them earlier? We as humans, are having to practice knowing that grief is not a temporary response to something in our lives.

[00:39:34] **Hilary:** That we grieve what didn't work out all our lives.

[00:39:45] **Dana:** And that's maybe one reason why this, these, these gatherings are so hard is because we're walking into the grief. And we're, we're, we're, it's so confronting.

[00:39:57] **Hilary:** Yeah.

[00:39:59] **Dana:** How much we've changed.

[00:40:01] **Hilary:** Yeah. Yeah. And I think it is, it's the divides we can't bridge. It's the places we can't go, even if we're willing to go, it's the, it's the ways we won't be seen and understood or that parts of us won't be celebrated, it hurts.

[00:40:24] **Hilary:** And that's why, having, having community, finding community around whatever work you're doing or whatever, identities you have or whatever makes your heartbeat faster is what. Is, makes life so much more livable.

[00:40:42] **Hilary:** So we were talking about to do, and I think we're, we're doing, or like tips or I think we're doing that to some degree, but it's also big concepts, like grief, that's just a big old concept. But I think embedded in that is the idea that we don't, you don't have to change yourself to fit in.

[00:41:03] **Hilary:** That's not going to make anything better. And the other thing is is that, you aren't, even if you're more like bendy and, and can put up with more shit doesn't mean that you should or have to. And it doesn't mean that that's ever inconsequential.

[00:41:22] **Dana:** I feel like there's women in my family who think that that makes them such a good person. Good person to be so bendy and shape shifty,

just their ability to orphan parts of themselves to stay in relationship and like, no one gets a medal for that.

[00:41:42] **Hilary:** Well that's how we're that's why we're so many people are still having sex with the white, white men basically and white supremacists.

[00:41:50] **Speaker 3:** Just a side note.

[00:41:54] **Hilary:** Yeah. Oh boy. Boy. It's true. [00:42:00] It is happening. You know why we let men vote for, we can't do anything, we can't not let men, but you know, we'll still put up with men that will put another, a rapist in office. So everyone still gets to feel like a man.

[00:42:21] **Hilary:** Hmm,

[00:42:24] **Dana:** Hmm. Deep breaths.

[00:42:27] **Sirius:** I, uh, I, I do think though that that's part of the deep training, right? The deep cultural training, particularly for women in those rest who have been socialized as women, sacrifice, uh, acceptance, uh, keeping the family together at all costs.

[00:42:49] **Speaker 5:** Mm-hmm.

[00:42:49] **Sirius:** apologizing for. Imagine slights, even that kind of messaging about what being a woman or a mother or a matriarch is, is so incredibly deep that it may, we shouldn't necessarily be surprised by it showing up in this way in this particular moment.

[00:43:15] **Sirius:** Around sort of the dynamics of, of, of couples or families that are together that you really question or how people are voting within that small group of people. Yeah, it's, it's unfortunate, but we shouldn't be surprised.

[00:43:33] **Speaker 6:** Mm hmm.

[00:43:39] **Hilary:** The system moving.

[00:43:40] **Dana:** And I think a couple things I'll just say is if, particularly if you're new to body trust and you come from lineages where you wish they would get this is, you may want to talk about it and you may want to tell people

about it. And certainly you're, you're welcome to, and there are people in your life that just are not reachable, teachable or ready.

[00:44:02] **Dana:** And this is a concept we learned from our friend, Erica Hines, that we spend our labor, labor with people who are reachable, teachable and ready, not the ones that want to debate you and exhaust you and be right. Because people who want to debate you are just looking to be right and win. But people who want to engage and learn and listen and hold space for you to tell them about something radically counter cultural, that's one of the faiths we, we always recommend if you're going to talk about body trust to warn people that what you're about to share with them is pretty counter cultural and they're likely to have strong reactions.

[00:44:41] **Dana:** That prepares them to at least hear what you're about to say. But for many people, it's It's, it may not be worth your labor, at least until you have deeper roots, because the minute they start to gaslight you is the minute you kind of start to question yourself and doubt yourself when you know the [00:45:00] truth, there's something deep that resonates here.

[00:45:02] **Dana:** And sometimes when seeds are shallow, and they're just being planted and they haven't rooted very deeply, we have to protect them. We cover them. And so you maybe just protect it, protect yourself, leave the room. When the diet talks happening, go for the first hour and then go, you can say you're sick if you need to, I'm not feeling well, I'm going to go home, whatever you need to, to get out of it, just get yourself out of it.

[00:45:29] **Dana:** But sometimes people are not ready to hear. We'll put in a link in the show notes to an, uh, blog we wrote about how to talk to people about body trust and some phrasing. That, that you can consider if you do talk to people and some other ideas for how to hold your boundaries. And we just want you to know that you can just say nope, nope, and that's enough, you might have to say nope three times.

[00:46:00] **Dana:** Nope. Nope. No, no, no, no, no, not listening. I don't want to hear it. Nope. And sometimes you might be doing that internally. You might not be saying nope externally, but you're like, no, that's not, I just don't even, that is not where I'm at anymore. And for whatever reason, you don't have it in you to, it doesn't feel like the right space, time, person to be.

[00:46:26] **Dana:** Doing anything more with,

[00:46:33] **Sirius:** I think another option for how to deal with some of this is to have backup and, and backup could look like a lot of different things. It could be bringing someone, a friend, a partner with you to an event. It could be that their role is just to be there with you when you step away. It might be that their role is to say the things, depending on what the relationship is, right?

[00:47:00] **Sirius:** So, having that backup can be really helpful, even prepping, a partner or a friend before, just so they know what the ask is. Backup could also be, sending a family member. An article or a podcast like this one ahead of or after a conversation that you might have to have a, a journal article that backup is really, really important, both to either support yourself or to support an idea that you're trying to share with someone else.

[00:47:33] **Sirius:** But just thinking about the ways in which you can get that support might be helpful to as you navigate some of these conversations. And the aftermath.

[00:47:48] **Dana:** Even just say having a friend on standby via text. Hey, do you mind if I text you a couple times while I'm at this family gathering? I might it's something I offer to friends. Like just text me if you need. [00:48:00] I'll, I'll be sure to chime in with some sarcastic humor. But I love that having a lifeline of sort.

[00:48:15] **Dana:** We also recommend that you lean on the foundations of body trust at this time of the year between being around, family and maybe more food and diet talk or talk of New Year's resolutions, which so many pertain to weight loss, often under the guise of health. And so, leaning on the foundations, the foundations of body trust are the things we return to.

[00:48:45] **Dana:** They're like little touchstones you can have in your pocket. They include, focusing on C work. Like, we don't want you to get an A in body trust work, we're going for a C. To look and listen with kindness and curiosity. Just to notice what's happening and to be curious about it to work the edges of your comfort zone.

[00:49:06] **Dana:** This, this, serious spoke to comfort zones and there may be times, especially when, if we've never set boundaries with someone, you are working the edges of your comfort zone. We want, we don't want you to be so far out of your comfort zone that you're hyper aroused or hypo aroused. But like how, this work and healing and reclaiming and recovery is, is about stretching, working the edges. It's often where the magic happens, happens is when we're stretching the edges of our, of our comfort zones. Honor your self preservation

practices. Hillary spoke to this earlier. Your coping is rooted in wisdom, and there are ways that you need to preserve yourself.

[00:49:51] **Dana:** What are those self preservation practices? There's a whole host of them. And which ones do you want to lean on? Community is so important. And it's sad that, you can go, Uh, to a family gathering and not experience community, fitting in is not the same as belonging. You can morph and shapeshift and use strategies of disconnection to stay in relationship and to fit in.

[00:50:19] **Dana:** That does not mean that you feel like you belong. So finding a community of people and leaning on that community of people who support your liberation. is key. That's why we started our school for unlearning. That's why we have our certification program is for providers who want to work from this lens to have community, especially when they work in private practice and have very little community.

[00:50:43] **Dana:** Having community can be so important. So finding even just one or two people that can hold space for you. To locate yourself and widen the lens, to locate yourself, your social location, intersecting [00:51:00] identities, your positionality. That's sometimes what I'm thinking about when I'm at parties. It's like, is this my labor to do?

[00:51:06] **Dana:** Yes. No. Also, like, locating yourself can just, like, where am I in this room? Where are my feet? This was something we were all leaning on, or some of us were leaning on yesterday, as we reckoned with the results of the election, is like, where are my feet? Like, I just tried to keep coming back to my body, where are my feet?

[00:51:27] **Dana:** Where are my feet? So, locating ourselves can, like, locate our breath, locate your feet, locate your body. Notice your butt in the chair. Helps to ground you. Sometimes in the moment is not the time to give folks feedback. That was one thing I meant to say earlier. So you, in the height of some kind of argument Or conversation.

[00:51:49] **Dana:** It may, you may not have the wherewithal to do it. Like it's better to let it go and circle back. You can even say, I would like to have this conversation with you. I cannot do it right now. I would love to circle back in a couple of days when I feel more resourced to do so. You don't have to do it. You may not be resourced or have the spoons to do it.

[00:52:11] **Dana:** And it may be useful to circle back when you are more feel more. in yourself and able to communicate what you want to communicate.

[00:52:22] **Dana:** So those are my thoughts. Anything else y'all want to share? I was going to read this It's Worth It poem. I thought it would be good to end this with the It's Worth It poem. So I'm going to read that before we wrap up. Anything else y'all want to say to our beloved listeners? Good luck out there.

[00:52:49] **Hilary:** Reminder, it's not you. It's not

[00:52:53] **Speaker 6:** you.

[00:52:56] **Speaker 3:** I don't know why I thought that was so funny. It's the first thing to say. Good luck. I'm out.

[00:53:07] **Sirius:** No, no, we're not out. We're still, we're still with you. We're ready to hold you afterwards. Uh, and, but, but. Some folks are interling perilous situations. And to them, I wish genuine good luck. Like we're, we're thinking about you.

[00:53:27] **Sirius:** We're sending all the positive vibes we can because we know,

[00:53:30] **Dana:** yeah,

[00:53:31] **Sirius:** we know we get it.

[00:53:36] **Dana:** Absolutely. Sometimes it can be helpful to think about the growing community or who are choosing this path as you sit in these spaces who don't get it because it kind of, Pulls your ancestors forward. It pulls like this community of people, like children. You can kind of feel it in these moments when you feel gas lit or a little unsteady [00:54:00] to remember, there are people who believe what you believe, who think what you think, and who know what, any wise words from the Kenevy mind.

[00:54:13] **Dana:** I think I

[00:54:14] **Hilary:** dropped what I had but yeah, you're, you're so not alone and it's, and it's not you. That's, that's what I would try to hold if you want a little, uh, I don't know, affirmation of sorts. Mm hmm.

[00:54:34] **Dana:** It's we have our, uh, a necklace that says reclaiming body trust on it. And I remember like you saying that reminded me that some people wear that necklace to gatherings and they hold it.

[00:54:47] **Dana:** As a reminder that there's a community of people that have these necklaces that are doing this work. So a touchstone to like a literal, like a stone,

[00:54:58] **Speaker 6:** a

[00:54:58] **Dana:** rock, something, a necklace, something that just helps you remember that there's a community of people. would be another offering. Okay, well, we will put some things in the show notes to support this episode, so be sure to check that out.

[00:55:18] **Dana:** And in the meantime, I'm, I just want you to prepare for, to receive these words from La'Aaron Alta. This is a poem called It's Worth It by La'Aaron Alta, and it's something that we often read at the end of our programs and workshops. So just notice how these words hit you. Maybe sit back and close your eyes

[00:55:41] **Dana:** and take a breath in and out.

[00:55:46] **Dana:** You will break hearts, burn bridges, and disappoint people on your path of liberation. You will disrupt perfection performances to save your sanity. You will pulverize the coziness of comfort, sometimes without knowing when you'll find it again. You will become a stranger to one's beloved people and institutions in order to become home to yourself.

[00:56:16] **Dana:** You will be rejected, unrecognized, misunderstood and judged. You will also discover that the risk is worth it. The risk is worth it, that your truth is more powerful than their approval, that your light is more liberating than their expectations. So burn it down, baby, burn it down.

[00:56:41] **Dana:** Set your chains on fire. Ignite your limited life. Baptize yourself in the dust. Rebirth yourself from the ashes and live the life. Live the life you have imagined.