

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover **EPISODE #17- Do Your Boobs Hang Low?**

Hey y'all, I'm Brooke Hoover. A Louisiana native, actor, writer and comedian. I've lost 100 pounds through diet and exercise or shall I say "lifestyle changes". My twenty year and counting health journey has taught me that just like taking a diet pill for weight loss, body positivity doesn't magically happen overnight. I'm working on re-gaining my self esteem and re-kindling my love affair with Cajun and Southern comfort food in a healthier way all the while juggling eating as clean as I can, re-establishing myself in the entertainment industry which, as we know, is historically fat phobic all the while showing my inner phat girl some love - that's phat with a PH - pretty hot and tempting. Let me tell y'all a tale or two...

I think I gotta start off this episode with a little song. (Singing) Do your boobs hang low do they wobble to and fro? Can you tie them in a knot? Can you tie them in a bow? Can you throw them over your shoulder like a continental soldier? Do your boobs hang low? I tripped up on the solider part. Let's try it one more time. (Singing, faster) Do your boobs hang low do they wobble to and fro? Can you tie them in a knot? Can you tie them in a bow? Can you throw them over your shoulder like a continental soldier? Do your boobs hang low?

That's what we used to sing to pregnant dogs when they would just be walking around you know with their boobs kind of flapping back and forth. But, have your pets spayed or neutered. Let's control the pet population. I grew up watching Bob Barker and the Price is Right. And, that message always and still rings true with me. Needless to say, we're not talking about Bob Barker or the Price is Right or dogs. We're talking about boobs today. Specifically we're talking about my boobs, which also might be the universal boob because I think people who have boobs will hopefully relate. So, it's a little bit embarrassing. But who cares? I'm in my closet with my bras ironically and I ironically I'm braless as usual but with a plethora of bras all around me because it makes for good sound padding. So, I have my rosemary essential oil and I have my rose quartz and we're ready to go because this is like a little vulnerable.

So, growing up, I don't know if I blame it on my body confidence issues, just plain body issues, growing up as a woman, Catholic guilt or whatever the case may be but I was really fearful and ashamed of getting boobs and I got boobs much earlier than some of the other girls. And, I think what really etched in my brain, what terrified me of getting boobs; I blame it on one of my favorite people. I didn't know this person personally but God rest his soul John Hughes. Because the movie Sixteen Candles when Molly Ringwald comes home and her grandparents are in her room and she goes upstairs and her grandma is like, "They're so perky." And she reaches, she's like, "Frank. She's getting her boobies" or something like that and she's like "They're so perky" and she reaches out for Molly Ringwald's boobs like who does that? That is so, so embarrassing. Well, it kind of happened in my family. Not nearly, nearly, nearly as bad. But, I used to love when my second cousins would come over

with my grandma Maw Maw and we would you know hang out at our kitchen table and we would be making Christmas Fudge, well Goldbrick Fudge which we always made for Christmas and Pralines. And, one day we're just going to town, making that fudge and those pralines and one of our cousins, my mom's first cousin, she looks over at me and she goes, "Brooke, you're getting boobs." I was about 11 years old. And, I knew I was getting boobs. Anybody who can grow boobs knows they're getting boobs. And, of course it made me do my Hunchback of Notre Dame thing that I was doing even worse and I kind of look around like I'm hoping somebody's going to have my back and my Hunchback of Notre Dame and I look over at my Maw Maw, my grandma, hoping that she would have my back cause if anyone, she was always the one to have my back, look over at Maw Maw like deer in headlights like help me out. Say something like, "No she's not" or "leave her alone" or "It's okay" or something. And, Maw Maw goes, "Yeah. Yeah. You're right. She is." I just felt like I was just so much on display and like there was something wrong with it. I don't know, it's inevitable. We're all going to get boobs, you know. People who are born as female. We're all going to get boobs and some men have man boobs and I'm not making fun of that. I'll talk a little about that later. But, I'm not making fun of man boobs either. I don't know why there's so much shame attached to it and why people, women especially have to point out other women, their loved ones, their relatives have to point out, "Oh you're getting boobies" or "Oh you're becoming a woman" or "Oh you're starting your period" and why there's shame attached to it. You know? And, those of you who've been listening to the podcast, those of you who know me know that Momma, my mom is very like loud and proud and like, "Hey Baby" kind of like that but about the boob situation, my mom always she had big boobs and she was always trying to hide them and joke about them and stuff. So, I think she understood my self-consciousness about them on a deeper level. Oh am I fixing to cry? So, she actually she was not there when her cousin called out my boobs. She was probably in the other room getting more butter or something and Momma always just kind of handled it how I wanted to handle it. Momma, instead of letting Jesus take the wheel or Momma taking the wheel, she let me take the wheel how I was going to navigate that because I think she didn't want to call out anything to make me feel any more self conscious than I already did.

So, I just kind of kept hoping that my Hunchback of Notre Dame thing would work where I'm you know hunching over kind of hiding my boobs and nobody would really notice. The problem was that we had to wear uniforms for school and our uniforms were white shirts. So, you could wear like a white cotton collared shirt or a white kind of button down collared shirt. So, obviously we know white you can kind of see through that more than you can see through thick navy or black. Buuuut, I worked the system a little bit.

So, you could wear a white collared shirt but you could wear a turtleneck underneath it. White or navy. So, even in like 90-degree weather in Louisiana, heat and humidity. You got heat and humidity in like March, please, it's like you're sweating your - I would say your boobs off but yeah I would say you're sweating your boobs or your butt off. So, I would wear these turtlenecks and that was a lot to

deal with because I'm sure people were looking at me like, "Why is this girl sweating profusely, hunched over, wearing a turtleneck and it's 90 degrees outside with 100% humidity?"

Later that summer, I was either turning 12 or 13 so my boobs are getting a little bit more in full effect if you will. We befriend this girl. I think she's so cool. Looking back, I think she, in my head she looked like Lady Gaga. So, her name was Nicole. So may or may not have been in the Mafia and I thought she was super cool. So, we're at our house in North Carolina where we went every summer and Nicole starts talking to me one day and she's like, "Big Summer. Big Summer. You're turning 12. I remember that." She was like, "Yeah. You got boobs. You gotta like get a bra." And, she just kind of like ripped the Band-Aid off. And, she was like look, I wear like these things.

And, she was like very like just free and body positive. Body positive before it was a thing. But, then again, if you look like Lady Gaga, I guess it's very easy to be body positive. It should be easy to be body positive no matter who you are. But, again society constantly tells us who and what and how we should be and look like

So, you know again, it's hard for the average Joe or Jane or the average Brooke or the average Phat Girl but none of us are average y'all. We're all above average. Needless to say, Nicole's like talking to me and my mom's around Nicole and I think Momma's seeing that Nicole's kind of getting through to me a little bit. You know? And, I'm looking up to Nicole. She's a cool girl. She's got some cool clothes. And, she's just kind of wearing these white tank top things. They're from Express. They have like these little branding things of the bottom of 'em. She like literally takes one off. She has a bra on underneath. So, she's like wearing almost two bras and she hands me one. She's like, "I have another one almost just like it. I'll bring it back to you tomorrow." So, I start wearing these random tank top things that Nicole has given me from Express. And, my mom can tell I really like them and while my mom never quite gave me the bra talk you know or the boob talk or the period talk you know in that sense because again it's uncomfortable and she could already tell I was uncomfortable about it so you know to anyone out there who might knock a parent for the way in which they're handling things, they're doing the best they can. They don't want to upset their children. They're reading the room. Let's put it that way. Why am I fixing to cry? But, my mom was always very good about reading the room. Maybe sometimes like a little too much but I am glad that she handled it the way that she did. Because, one of my friend's moms, this was her boob advice to us...

She goes, (deep southern accent) "Girls, don't y'all ever, ever, if you get pregnant, do not ever, ever let the baby breastfeed because it will ruin your tits forever." So, that was some advice I got. Some other advice I got was from my friend's mom, Miss Jeannette was her name and this was actually wonderful advice. Miss Jeannette said (upbeat Southern accent), "Now, girls, when it's time to start getting those bras and those training bras, all right I'm gonna tell y'all a little something. The secret is not to get a white one but to get a nude because the white will show up. But, the nude won't." And that was actually really excellent advice. My mom didn't throw advice

out there like that but she did do this. So, this is before the days of Amazon. I mean hello. This is before the days of -- like you could mail order stuff but it might take a week or two for things to come in and we're in the mountains of North Carolina where the nearest mall is about an hour and ten minutes away, one way. So, Momma's like, "Y'all let's get in the car and we're going to go down to Asheville and we're gonna go look for some of these--she didn't call them bras--some of these Express tank tops for Brooke."

So, Nicole, my mom and I, we get in the SUV and we roll down to Asheville and we look all over. There's like two malls. You know? In Asheville. If that. Maybe there was just one at the time. We look at Express and Momma's like, "Limited's similar to Express. Let's look at Limited." We look there. We look at Dillard's. We look at Belk. We look all over the place. And, I was very, very big on, "I don't want underwires." I didn't quite need an underwire yet. "I don't want lace because lace equates girly and prissy and sexy and I don't want that. I don't want to admit I have boobs. I want to be a kid forever. I don't want to admit that I'm becoming a woman. It's too difficult."

So, what Momma did is we drove around to countless stores in the beautiful mountains but still out in the middle of nowhere in the early 90's looking for like a needle in the haystack because Nicole had probably gotten these Express tank tops a couple years ago because they were worse for wear. Whatever the expression is, they were getting worn down. So, needless to say we find these kind of training bra tank top things by Jockey with an elastic band at the bottom and I got a couple of them but I never really wore them. I actually tried to cut the elastic out and rip the elastic out and just wear the tank top part which didn't really suffice. So, I get back home to middle school and I'm alternating these, at this point really ratty tank top things from Nicole.

And, then one day, I'm sweating my butt off with the ratty tank top, a navy blue turtleneck and my white collared uniform shirt and my mom is sitting me down and trying to talk to me about like look we're going to have to find some bras for you. We're going to have to figure something out. And, my mom, I remember her being like, "Baby I hate bras too. They're annoying. They're uncomfortable. You dance. Maybe you would wear like these leotard things."

And, I'm thinking yeah that could work and my dad overhears us somehow, miraculously and he's like (Deep man's Southern drawl), "Brooke. You need to start wearing a bra." And I mean I don't know but that really got to me cause I was like oh my God. You know? If my dad's saying it, that...that is embarrassing. So you know what? You know what y'all?

Everybody's noticing my boobs. Everybody's acting like you know they're in control of my boobs. I'm going to be in control of my boobs okay? I come from a land where showing your boobs gets you gold. I mean not literally gold. It gets you plastic beads made in China. But, you know I'm from Louisiana. Mardi Gras, hello. Throw me something, mister. You're showing your boobs. You know what I did back in the day.

I would just show my fake boobs which was my fat underneath my boobs and I would fool everybody. So, I said, "You know what? I'm rebelling." Okay? Miss Jeannette had given some sound advice about not wearing a white bra, wearing a nude bra. I took that a step up. I started getting black bras from Victoria's Secret. Satin not lace. Because Satin, I just kind of wanted to cover it all up and wear it like a shield like an armor. So, I got navy, black, leopard. Ah, leopard. See that one to my YouTube friends, video friends, it's like a purple and pink like a leopard print bra. And, I remember my favorite bra was like this hot pink kind of orchid print bra and I was like, "You know what? Everyone's gonna see through my shirt and they're going to see I'm wearing a bra. And, it's a fierce bra."

And, surprisingly no one complained. They complained about me wearing my Birkenstocks at school but nobody complained about me wearing my bras so, who knows? So, it finally became a thing, sorry. It finally stopped becoming a thing and it really should've never been a thing to begin with. But, it was a thing. Because again, society makes it a thing. I'm not blaming in on my family members. I'm not blaming anyone. I blame society cause it's easy to blame like a whole group but it's not even a whole group it's just you know it's history it's kind of like in the DNA if you will. That boobs are a sign of womanhood and womanhood is something to be proud of but it's also something to hold shame to and also you should hold shame if your boobs are too big. Oh you're too sexy. But, if your boobs are too small are you not sexy enough? Oh but if your boobs are too small you should get breast implants. Oh but they look too fake. Oh and men what about men who have boobs? Men shouldn't have boobs. Oh and what about breastfeeding? God forbid somebody's breast-feeding. That's offensive. Whereas in foreign countries, I say foreign countries, I don't mean every single foreign country, I mean many cultures, boobs aren't even a symbol of sexy. They're a symbol of milk like we're feeding our babies so get over it, people. What is your big thing? I spent - also several, several months and weeks at one point getting the best knife possible, a Cutco knife cause Cutco was that brand they sold door to door back in the day. I got a Cutco knife that we had in our kitchen before dance class, I used to try to cut off my boobs. And, I was an honor student, I was pretty smart to know that you cannot lob off your boobs, especially before dance class. Like hello you're going to bleed to death. It's like enough's enough.

Nowadays I'm not ashamed of my boobs at all cause I'm like whatever. They're boobs. Until one day. I have an acting gig and it's for this product. It's for a product called "The Tearable Towel" not terrible as in "You're terrible Muriel" but like the towel tears and you can like put the towel on and off after a shower and it's like this random gig out in the middle of New Jersey and the producer, I couldn't wear a bra obviously because it's a towel that you're modeling and she's like, "Oh Brooke. Kind of like rub your boobs a little bit." I was like, "Excuse me?" And she was saying this in front of a bunch of crew which you know, a bunch of dudes if you will, a bunch of like bro dudes at that. She's like "Yeah. Your nipples are showing. Kind of rub your boobs. Rub your nipples down." And, I remember calling my manager and telling him like "What is this?" again I wanted like what I had done with my Maw Maw, my

grandma, wanting some sympathy, some empathy and my manager just laughs at me.

And, perhaps it was comedic and it is comedic now. But, again, there's just such shame still associated with that. Needless to say, I don't ever know what happened with that towel commercial. I don't really remember that. I just know that now, now that I have hit the big 4-0, oh God forbid I just said my age. So, I've hit the big 4-0 and I've lost weight, usually your boobs are the first place to lose weight, right. So yes and no that kind of did happen to me but now I'm just working. All these years of being ashamed of having boobs and now that my boobs have kind of deflated a little bit, I'm just working on making them not sag, you know? I have been doing like side planks and a lot of arm exercises, chest exercises, chest presses. I can even do that thing like those men do maybe AC Slater where you kind of make your pecs jump. because, after all those years of wanting to hide my boobs, now I don't want my boobs to go away. I think we'll leave it at that. I don't have a better ending spot than that other than to say friends you know if I have friends listening or fellow listeners who I don't know yet who are potential friends, if you have a child who is of that certain age, navigate it very, very gently, because boobs and body and growing up and becoming a person who you're meant to be is never anything meant to be ashamed of.

Now, I think maybe I gotta go wipe some boob sweat off.

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