

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover
EPISODE #23- Beach Body Freedom

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...

It was the best of times. It was the worst of times. Swimsuit season, that is! Yes, good ole swimsuit season y'all. Because I LOVE to swim. But, I of course always had so many body positive issues that swimsuit season and wearing a swimsuit was like baring my soul and my rolls of fat and my rolls of shame and then I started getting boobs and it was utterly, udderly horrible and terrifying.

But, I did not always, always have body issues because I wasn't always a pre-pubescent, pubescent kid. Prior to that I was this stick skinny little kid who would walk around at the age of 3 in a I did have bikinis. I remember the last time I wore a bikini I remember it was like red and a little fluffy and it had Disney characters like the classic Disney characters on it. And, I remember I was doing laundry in it. Yes. I started doing laundry at a very early age. But, that didn't last long because like I said, I started blowing up and the world, society started telling me that I should be ashamed of myself. Yes, you should swim because swimming is good for you and you love to swim. But, you better look good in a swimsuit even at the age of 8. This is so messed up, y'all. So messed up.

But, I don't think or I don't feel I'm alone in this and heck even if I am alone in this...somebody will relate in some shape or form. So, solution if you are afraid to show your boobs and your rolls of fat with a swimsuit is to wear a t-shirt. Wear a t-shirt, heeey. Y'all, I even had favorite t-shirts that had such a good cotton softness but a lower cling factor like I would set them aside but as they started to disintegrate because of the chlorine, I'd freak out because I'd have to find new t-shirts to put into the rotation. There was a lot of trial and error.

This was a lot. A lot for a 9 year old to handle. How screwed up is this you know? Children -- we aren't born afraid of or hating or being ashamed of our bodies. You know? Somebody or some entity, society, I think it's a group of people you know obviously tell us that along the way. You know, we see that, we observe that throughout time be it in commercials, with family members, with friends, magazines, school, at church, wherever you're learning it from and I say church because you know a lot of times people who go to church are some of the biggest hypocrites of all. I said it. But, people make you feel baaaaad. I just said baaaaad (Baa

like a sheep sound) Baaaad. Like I'm a sheep. People make you feel bad. And, then you allow yourself to believe it. People make you feel ashamed. And, you allow yourself to believe it and you wear a t-shirt and you're like hey I'm going swimming.

But, I told myself that my t-shirt was like my suit of armor. I had to wear it. It would not let people see that I was fat underneath. It would not let people know that I had boobs underneath. God forbid. But, come on y'all. There are wet t-shirt contests for a reason. Hello. Cause they bare all. I mean the t-shirts make it more obvious you know when you're emerging from the water, you can see everything including your fear even more right? Cause you're wearing the t-shirt because you are...you're afraid of your body. God forbid that you be chubby or overweight or rotund or whatever the word you want to use and you don't also accept that. because then you're overweight and you don't have any confidence and therefore you are a horrible person. I'm saying this all in this kind of sing-songy type of voice because it's BS. You know? That's what messages are out there. At least that's the messaging I'm gathering. But, come on, it doesn't take a rocket scientist or a Philadelphia lawyer as my mom likes to say to know that something is not equating. Right? And it's not always something within our own minds. It's something that the world has put out there. Especially America. Especially Western Society. And, I am recording this right around the Fourth of July.

For very good reason because the whole idea of this podcast is about freedom from that BS that society has told you that you have to look a certain way. That you have to be beach body ready. What is that beach body ready anyways? Yes, I love doing the exercises. Beach body exercises. But I'm not doing it so I don't look good on the beach. I'm doing it so I feel good and a little less psychotic in my mind because exercise is good for your mind and your body but yes I'm not doing it to fit into a swimsuit. However, when I was younger, I totally would've drank that Kool-Aid. You know?

So, here's the deal about t-shirts, after I get out of the pool or the ocean or the lake and I'm swimming with this t-shirt billowing around me like I'm a sting ray but really less of a stingray, I'm like the person who has betrayed the mafia and I'm being drowned in the East River - I emerge. And, I'm bringing extra attention to myself like I talked about. Because, it's the red flag of I'm fat and I'm self-conscious.

So I start getting the boobs as we know that I want to hide with the t-shirt and then at a time, it's age appropriate to have boobs so the boobs kind of take away from the fat so I'm like okay I'll start like taking off the t-shirt showing the boobs but at the same time I'm getting what I call the shabbies. Or some people call it chub rub I think (rubbing sound as Brooke rubs hands together) your upper thighs rub together. So, I've always had really skinny calves and there was a good amount of time where -- I don't know if you can hear that sound (Brooke rubs hands together to symbolize thighs)? That's my hands doing that cause my legs no longer did it. But, believe me, my legs rubbed and I would get the shabbies. So, (chuckles) see-- I don't know why I'm laughing at myself. Who do I think I am? But, the shabbies when you

would get out from the water, it would be very obvious that your legs are rubbing together. You know?

So, the t-shirt wouldn't always cover the shabbies you know. So, I've lost the t-shirt cause I'm like whatever I'll show my boobs now. And, the boobs are kind of further out than the stomach so that detracts from that. There's a whole logic to this, y'all. But, the shabbies are obvious. So, I start walking with my legs spread like I'm a Sumo wrestler getting into position. You know? But, here's a solution for that wear shorts. Specifically, go where it's encouraged to wear shorts while swimming. Such as Sliding Rock, North Carolina. You look like a fool, you look like a complete newbie or amateur if you go down sliding rock without shorts. You need jeans or something really rough that you can you know, you don't mind tearing up cause your butt of whatever you're wearing is gonna get torn up from that sliding rock eventually.

And, then I also started taking some of my dad's Patagonia swim trunks with the mesh lining in there and wearing those and just fashioning my whole outfit that way and every so often I would wear the occasional t-shirt if we were around people where I was ashamed of showing my boobs too. And, I don't mean I was flashing them. I just mean I was afraid to be full throttle in a swimsuit with somebody seeing my boobs. Which is crazy because hello people born as women with mammary glands, you get boobs, you know? But, something that made me feel more confident were tankinis. I loved when tankinis came out in about the 90s and sometimes I would even wear tankinis with shorts and I just felt like I was wearing you know a tighter outfit that I could still do water sports in and not look like a complete tool. That was such a relief.

A few times my momma suggested you know and I did have a few of kind of like the swim dresses. But, I was like, "Mom, I look like an 80 year old synchronized swimmer." You know? They were actually some of the cutest, the cutest patterns. But, I think those drew the most attention.

But, y'all I can't exactly remember when it happened but I eventually got over my hang-ups with the whole what do I wear? How do I accessorize at the beach or at the pool or at the lake? And, I credit it to the Spanish Riviera. Because, we go there on a trip when I'm about 16 or 17 years old with a school tour group and I see people on the beach that are nude, topless, wrinkly, saggy, imperfect. Oh my God. They're not perfect and they don't give a (MAKES A MOUTH FART NOISE)

And you know what? After the initial shock, neither did I. I'm like they're just people. And, they're not perfect and they're baring it all or they're baring a lot of it. And, they're having a good time. That's what I remember the most. Not the wrinkles. Not the chub rub. Not rub. Not the boobs. But, that they were having a fun time.

So, after that trip, I started becoming more and more aware of when I was in a swimsuit at the pool or beach or lake with super skinny friends. Body perfect in my mind. I would have loved to have been their size. And, they're complaining about a

tiny little dimple or potential cellulite on their leg. Or a non-existent roll of fat. And, then it was like they'd all complain in a little circle. They'd start complaining, one, one, one, like a round of a clock and they'd get to me like Brooke at 6 o'clock or wherever kind of expecting me to also body shame myself and I'm thinking, internally, "Dudes, I'm already hating myself. Hating on myself from the inside. I'm trying to at the same time love myself. Do not make me also join in your game of verbal torture and abuse just because that is what is expected of us as the female species."

Give me a break. So, instead I started responding, "Hey have y'all ever been to Cos del Sol. It's awesome." Because that was the area I went to in the South of Spain and I would just start talking about these people and hopefully trying to enlighten my friends when truly I wasn't even halfway enlightened. But, I was trying.

And, yeah y'all I've lost 100 pounds and I still have a TON of body hang-ups. If it's not one thing, it's something else.

One of my favorite comedians and one of my favorite books - favorite comedians is Gilda Radner and one of my favorite books is by her, it's called, "It's Always Something". So, my point is, it's always something. You're always going to be picking something apart. Like for me it was the body fat. Then it also became the boobs. Then it became the chub rub or the shabbies. And nowadays it's like my armpit fat or it's the way my right flat foot indents into the sand when I walk because I have a bad right flat foot. It's always something. If we let it be something.

Or, can we have freedom from that? Can we have freedom from making it being about finding something bad about yourself to nitpick on? When does that freedom happen when we finally stop finding the bad and we don't even have to find the good. We don't have to go from like "Oh I hate my shabbies. I hate my chub rub." to being like, "I have the most perfect body." But, you could at least say, "But you know what? These legs got me to the beach today." You know you could go from one drastic negative talk to the next slight step up. I'm not talking about being Pollyanna Saccharin you know?

So, actually, this is my first year to wear a bikini. It's been over three decades that I have worn a bikini. And, you know what? I still don't look beach body ready in some people eyes. Maybe in general society's eyes. Maybe even in Sports Illustrated's eyes. Because if y'all have noticed, when plus sized models are on the covers, they look perfect. Right? And, I appreciate what all the plus size models are doing out there with their missions of showing you don't have to be a size zero but what the photo shop does is they still make the plus size models look perfect with their curves. There's still air brushing and stuff going on all up in there. So, I just look like a regular person but I am proud of how far I have gotten. I am proud that I'm able to swim like a beast. I am proud that I no longer have to wear a t-shirt because that could make me drown. I am proud that I no longer have to wear shorts to have to

swim in because that made it challenging to constantly be stealing my dad's Patagonia's without him yelling at me.

So, I ask y'all for this Fourth of July whether you're in the United States of America or not. Wherever you are, let's think about freedom in a new sense. New sense. Not Freedom in a Nuisance not like "Oh you're a nuisance, you're disturbing, you're annoying." Freedom in a new way, I should say. Freedom from those t-shirts. Freedom from the shorts. Freedom from your negative self talk. So, that way you can enjoy everything a swimsuit brings. All the good things. You know? Water fun. Backyard laying out. Rooftop laying out. Rolling around on the beach in the sand. Wave runners. Whatever you're doing in a swimsuit, just fricking enjoy it. Give yourself that liberty. And, you know what y'all?

If you are really still worried about showing your bikini body or your beach body or your swimsuit body or whatever the wording is, just remember, there is an 85 year old woman out there on the Spanish Riviera who is living her best life; cellulite, sagging skin and all, so don't miss out on that fun. And, especially on this day of Independence in the US of America if Congress is going to try to control our bodies, we have to get really good at having control of our own body image and not fit into a ridiculous construct of perfection because that y'all sure as hell is not freedom.

Thanks so much for listening, y'all. It is my hope to inspire, uplift and entertain you with this Who's Dat Phat Girl podcast. So, if you're HUNGRY for more, you can book me to speak or perform my solo show that inspired this podcast Phat Girl Costumes written by yours truly and directed by my best bud Brian Lady at your virtual or in person event. Please visit BrookeHoover.com/fluffybuttproductions or email me at contactbrookehoover@gmail.com for more information. And, let's follow each other on instagram - I'm @Br00keH00ver and those O's are not the letter O but they're ZEROS. Not because I want to be a size 0 but because I guess I'm just so clever with my late 90s Yahoo! self

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