

## **Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover** **EPISODE #-29 Just DOn't**

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...

A few weeks ago, I had to break my own crazy TYPE A pact of doing one podcast a week and take a mental health break. I was just overwhelmed. And I felt a tinge guilty because oftentimes - most times I feel like taking a break directly relates with laziness. And to me laziness is the root of all evil. I once told a therapist who I broke up with (only for insurance reasons - it wasn't her, it was me, well it was Amerihealth) that it's one thing to be fat. It's one thing to be lazy. It's a whole other thing to be fat and lazy. So, I always thought my over zealous work mode would...oh no I'm fixing to use this word TRUMP my fatness. And then my border line hypothyroid exhaustion and the exhaustion of the ups and downs of freelance life got to me and I started to realize, ever so slowly that this go, go, go, do, do, do, respond, respond, respond and never feel like I'm getting anywhere vibe would kill me. My boyfriend Harry and my momma Anne may have told me that as well. But, I didn't believe it till I felt the heart palpitations.

When the pandemic hit in March 2020, I didn't stop DO-ing. I didn't jump on the Netflix binge wagon in March or April or May. I stayed in my pajamas or athleisure or an extra sexy flattering combo of both but I had a schedule and structure, or at least what I thought was consistency, schedule and structure. The only thing I was consistent about was taking ample time throughout the day to beat myself up for how unproductive I was.

I went into mode of "well, now I have TIME to create my WHOLE list of to-do's or to create's so let's get ON it, you lazy girl." I ignored the fact that that's not how creation works (or good creation works). I ignored the fact that that's not how a body / mind / psyche works. I ignored the fact that that's not how ANY of us should work during a global pandemic or during a normal day or during a NEW NORMAL day. But, I pressed on and got busy DO-ing things.

I drew. I wrote. I made YouTube videos. But, I still didn't feel accomplished. I saw posts and read articles about how stinking creative my fellow stinky creatives were being and I said, "Brooke, you had better get ON it more. They are on to something you aren't. NOW is the time to create ALL your chef d'oeuvres, you lazy, worthless piece of snot." I guess you could say that somewhere along the way in college

preparatory school or theatre school, I learned that tough love was the way to go. So, I kept pressing on and signing up for EVERY. SINGLE. ZOOM. I could get my WiFi on. I attended Zooms on Acting. I took Zooms on Writing. I took Zooms on Self Help. I took copious notes in all the empty notebooks I had waiting around, waiting to be filled up. When appropriate, I reached out and touched base and thanked the person leading the workshop. Also, I did forty-five minutes of cardio and/or yoga six days a week (also via Zoom) and called myself lazy and weak if I rested on the seventh day. I did all things that a “good girl should” during a pandemic.

And, side bar, the workouts I did were the only thing that made me feel better and stay focused and grounded. I wasn't pushing myself in a toxic way when it came to exercise. I actually viewed it was “an exercise sesh a day will keep the covid away.” But I WAS pushing myself in a bad way when it came to creative and work productivity. I think with exercise I wasn't feeling like I was pushing myself because I learned long ago during my weight loss journey that pushing myself when it comes to weight loss would only make my cortisol skyrocket hence making weight loss much more difficult because now we're messing with our adrenals. So exercise was one thing that really kept me - and still keeps me sane. I just needed to exercise to feel alive, to keep my immune system up, to measure my lack of laziness somehow because when you're creating things, it's SO SO SO hard to actually really measure productivity or success.

See, in the entertainment business, it is ingrained in our brains that you are only as good as the project you're currently part of - or, better yet, the shiny bright new one on your future horizon. And, if you don't have a project to be a part of, well, you had for sure be creating your OWN project and it better have some social media following and some clout and some MONEY behind it. If you don't have either of the above, well you're worthless. At least that's what I've gathered from all my years of tedious research and self depreciation.

We all saw those commercials for; I even auditioned for voice-overs for commercials for how everyone was taking the quarantine time to learn a fun hobby or to chill and relax with family during this pandemic. I was envious. Even when it was time to get out into nature between May and October, I was on a super schedule to GET. MY. NATURE. ON. I told my boyfriend we had to leave home by 9:00 am at the very latest on a weekday after FORGET leaving after 7:00 am on a weekend in order to soak up the beauty that the various areas of Western New Jersey, The Jersey Shore and the Hudson Valley of New York have to offer. I had to rush, organize, do, do, do, (doo doo?) in order to be able to have my five minutes of Zen in Harriman State Park / Duke Farms..

Then, continuing to be a DO-er, a constant go, go, go-er true to my stubborn, frenetic yet focused self in the Fall of 2020, I pulled a pole out of my mom's Jeep and I herniated two discs in my lumbar spine. And, I had to SLOW. THE. HECK. DOWN.

I felt an excruciating pain that didn't even compare with kidney stones, a bad

breakup or stubbing a toe (the worst pain of all three, that's why I saved it for last). I couldn't walk but I made myself because I know with back pain, you have to keep it moving. You move it you lose it. But, I couldn't adjust myself in bed without making Halloween noises. I couldn't pee without my mom holding a Big Gulp cup for me at my bedside. I couldn't watch the new Borat movie because the laughing hurt so badly. During all of the Halloween noises, I STILL forced myself to tune into Zooms. To finish illustrating my darn children's book. To continue to beat myself up for just. Not. Doing. Enough.

Then my emotions started going from frustrated to overwhelm to despair. Which, I know from the **Emotional Guidance Scale** (thanks Abraham Hicks and Gabby Bernstein) is going down on the emotional scale and is not really a good thing. For example, if freedom and being present in the moment is a 10 out of 10, frustration is like a 4 out of 10 and despair, well that's a 0 out of 10. I was at like a negative five.

I realize herniating a disc is comparable to a paper cut in 2020. There are SO many worse things than a herniated disc - COVID for starters, gosh darn it. However, it still hurt like all get out. It was debilitating on many levels. The physical pain was so intense and I've given birth to a few kidney stones naturally. But, it was the MENTAL pain of Not. Being. Able. To. Do. And worrying if I would gain weight. And worrying if I would ever be able to do acting work and stunt work again.

And, my feelings started spiraling to all the things I once could do and now wasn't able to do. And, those things I wanted to do weren't even all of the BUSY-ness bull shit I had consumed myself with. They were simple things like walking the dogs, doing down dog, getting on the floor with my dogs and pretending I was a Pomeranian.

So, I tried to take time to rest. I tried to just Netflix and chill. I tried to STOP Zooming. To STOP forcing myself with self imposed deadlines. To STOP beating myself up for being "lazy." When really, I just needed time to heal - physically and, arguably more importantly - MENTALLY.

Then, while scrolling through Facebook looking at how stinking productive so many of my peers were being, I saw that a dear friend of mine who is an angel healing practitioner posted that the constant DO-ing is oftentimes out of fear or control. NAIL. ON. THE. HEAD. I want to say "this completely opened my eyes" but to be honest that was two years ago and I am still falling back into my old wreckless habits especially, even more recklessly now as we navigate this new normal. That was two years ago and I am still doing the same stuff to myself. But, I am WORKING on it. I realized during my weight loss journey that beating myself up, that sticking with doctors who beat me up, that tough love trainers were NOT the answer. Literally, because when I stopped all of that and started just focusing on exercising to help my body and mind, that's when weight loss became easier. So, why can't the mental health component of it all come easier?

I am still working on just BE-ing and not DO-ing and not beating myself up about NOT DO-ing AND not beating myself up for beating myself up. It is exhausting.

Luckily, the nerve pain from the herniated disc has gotten better and I'm now roller skating at a skate park where I can see the back clinic where a physician's assistant basically told me I will have issues ever walking again and I'll only get worse. I flip the bird at that place sometimes then I worry I will lose my balance and fall while I flip the bird because God and the Universe and Mr. Baby Jesus will be mad at me. And instead I try to thank that place and that part of my journey for teaching me a lesson that I am still trying to learn. Oftentimes, and I know my fellow Type A peeps totally agree with me here - and I know my Type B peeps may have tuned out by now and may just be picking their belly button and that's fine too - sometimes your body will tell you to CHILL THE HECK OUT in the most drastic way to give you a message. That was the message I learned nearly two years ago. This time, in July 2022 it was my mind trying to tell me something and I listened to it - a little. It's okay if I want to do a little R & R sometimes. Sometimes the R & R can even stand for roller skating and reading (and not a script or book about acting) because it is okay to do an activity that we ENJOY that does not involve being so stinking creative or productive because ironically that in turn will make us more productive. Kind of like NOT obsessing over your diet, your waist, your scale will actually HELP you get to your goal weight or more like make you a more grounded person and feel better overall because NOTHING GOOD ever came out of stressing yourself (myself) out.

I think we still put mental health on the back burner - heck I think we still put physical health on the back burner - the back burner to our to do list. Y'all, I advise ALL of us and I'm preaching to the choir here, if you made a To Do list today, scratch off one thing. SCRATCH IT OFF. Especially if it involves doing something for someone else who may not even appreciate anyways. I really don't like to say that. I'm a super giving almost times over giving person but I'm realized burnout happens when you do something that oftentimes feels for naught. Our own mental health is much more important than trying to do a good deed for the sake of just doing something that doesn't come from the heart. Taking that extra class, signing up for that extra Zoom, is that REALLY going to create true productivity? Or is sitting alone in nature, looking at a stream for however long you have going to maybe, just maybe allow you to connect with yourself and a higher power if you believe in one and give you that idea or answer you've been looking for? The answers do NOT come in the constant over doing and over achieving.

Every single day, I want to revert to my former default. I want to start over DO-ing. Because that's where I feel comfortable. I don't feel comfortable taking a pause. But, I know after all the slow work I've put into healing myself, it will only be detrimental to go back to old habits. They say good things come to those who wait. I think good things come to those who have patience with themselves. Because, sometimes the PHATest thing the most pretty hot and tempting thing we can do is just not doing anything at all.

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](https://Brookehoover.com/fluffybuttproductions) or email me at [contactbrookehoover@gmail.com](mailto: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

And, if you like this podcast, please give me a five star rating and write a review on Apple Podcasts and, please, most importantly, share with your friends, family and other people you may know who are as phat as we are - that's phat with a PH.

©2022 Brooke Hoover Who's Dat Phat Girl?