

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover
EPISODE #36- Attitude of Gratitude

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.

hot and tempting. Let me tell y'all a tale or two...

Ah, November. This is the time when we all start thinking about one of my favorite holidays- Thanksgiving and about giving thanks - along with a slice of insert your favorite pie here. More on pie in a couple of episodes y'all.

Why is it that we tend to only think about gratitude in November, or giving and being charitable around Christmas or about being healthy and getting back on track at the top of the New Year?

That's just the way society and marketing has programmed us. Kind of like most of us - thanks to our cave people ancestors are programmed to ASSume and expect the worst. We are in flight or fright mode. At least I am. And, if you aren't then well bless your heart with perfect blood pressure.

My name is Brooke Hoover and I suffer from anxiety. I grew up in South Louisiana where we party for most of the year but we're also preparing for the worst and praying for the best during hurricane season from like June to late October. I come from a long line of self-proclaimed worrywarts. And being in a creative and freelance business where I don't feel like I have much control so I have to amp up my anxiety in order to feel like I have the reigns, I get it honest as my dad would say.

I treat my anxiety the au naturel way because psychiatric meds have not worked for me. And let's pause y'all. We haven't talked much about mental health yet specifically in this here podcast though I hope we all understand my underlying theme of body positivity and self talk DO go hand in hand with mental health. I've had to take some mental health breaks over the past few months as we know and I about had an emotional breakdown in a podcast episode a few podcast episodes back, so I think it's time we pop the pimple - and I hope we get the core - and talk it OUT.

So, ah, anxiety, we are programmed to worry because that's how our cave people ancestors operated - and it worked for them to run away from saber tooth tigers and run towards Paleo food. But, it doesn't really serve us well anymore to freak out over every little stressor and believe me; we all know there are a LOT of stressors today. Much more than our ancestors Gar and Ugh had to deal with I'm sure.

I handle anxiety with a lil cocktail of CBD oil, kava kava tea, some homeopathy by Boiron for stress relief, meditation, crystals and acupuncture but honestly, when those don't work - and oftentimes NONE of those work in the moment when anxiety is in full effect. Anxiety in full effect. What HAS started working for me is focusing on GRATITUDE when anxiety is raring its fugly head.

Here me out. There's something called the Emotional Guidance Scale and if you're fans and followers of peeps like Abraham Hicks or Gabby Bernstein, you may have heard of it. Grief and despair are the lowest on the emotional pain scale at a level #22. The LOWER you go in numbers the HIGHER VIBRATION and therefore the better feeling emotion is achieved. So, Joy and appreciation are a level #1. Overwhelm is a level #11 and Frustration and Irritation are a level #10. So, in a nutshell, grief and despair are the lowest of the low. And, we want to be out of that. You can't go from a level #22 to a level #1 right away. As the late great Debbie Ford used to say you can't put ice cream on top of poop. But you CAN go from one level to the next, to a higher vibration, a better feeling step by step. So, while overwhelm, frustration and irritation are CRAPPY feelings and that's where my anxiety spends most of its life, it's still higher on the emotional scale than utter despair. Y'all feel me? But, we want to work towards a level #1 which is joy. It can't always be attained. That isn't realistic. Maybe it is to our cave ancestors Gar and Ugh whilst eating Saber Tooth tiger pate.

So, in a nutshell, what I'm saying is, what's the best way to get out of an anxiety trap? Because that's what it is. A spiral. A trap. A tornado. The best way is to STOP worrying about WHAT IF is to start being grateful for WHAT IS. At least that's what I am currently working on.

So, for example. If you're stressing out, say about your car giving you transmission problems. I'm not saying be like "my car is wonderful. I'm so grateful for my car." Because right in that moment of anxiety, it's going to be hard to completely flip switch it to be grateful about something related to that thing or circumstance that is giving you anxiety? So, instead maybe while you're stressing about that transmission giving you hell, you're having a good ass cup of coffee with chicory. You can say, I am grateful for this coffee with chicory.

Okay that's a kind of lame example. I'll be more vulnerable with y'all. If you're having anxiety say about your acting career and what the hell you're doing with your life and going through a mid life crisis, it's hard to be like, "I am grateful for my career and my life." It feels fake. But, you (and by you I mean me) can be grateful for something very small and specific and different to that what you're worrying about such as "I am grateful that there are less lantern flies in my backyard than there were in August."

Or let's apply it to weight loss. They say BLESS YOUR BODY. BE GRATEFUL FOR YOUR BODY. Hell y'all it felt SO fake when I was feeling super heavy and fatty guhl to say shit like "I bless my beautiful stomach and I'm so grateful for it." Because it felt

like I was being phony. I didn't FEEL it in my soul. I didn't feel more grateful. I felt more pissed off. So, instead I would say stuff like, "While I may not love my fat stomach, I love that I'm regular (I mean I poop regularly.)" Or, "I have pretty decent legs." Or, "I can African dance with the best of them." When I'm having bad body image issues these days, I'll focus on the fact that at least my herniated discs aren't bothering me and that I can dance to Ghostbusters for my fluffs Annie and Archer.

Anything that feels real to us, that feels grounding to us - because the things we feel anxious about can feel oh so real to us too - we need something that takes us out of the cycle of anxiety and beating ourselves up and being crappy to ourselves. Word?

I acknowledge that we are programmed to expect the worst and prepare for disaster. I definitely am. But then I tell myself I'm also programmed to be thankful because ever since I was a little kid, Momma always taught me to show appreciation and gratitude to people. As soon as a gift was received, Momma taught me to get an artistic, creative and personal thank you note going - and it FELT GOOD to thank that person to hopefully make them feel appreciated. I mean I am so programmed that I have almost wrote thank you notes for a thank you note.

So, while we can say our cave people programmed us to be negative and fearful and ready for battle, we also have compassion and gratitude built underneath all these layers as well and we just have to dig for it.

Something I've been learning lately is that oftentimes we aren't grateful for something until it's gone or not existent in the moment. And we spend the rest of the moments wondering about the WHAT IF instead of just being in the moment and being grateful for WHAT IS.

I have not taken running water for granted ever since the early 90's, for example. Every time I take a bath or a shower, I am grateful. No matter how bad my anxiety can be, I can always revert back to being grateful for something as what we in the Western world think is simple as running water. Case in point: At our house in North Carolina, we got well water from our creek. Our house was at the top of a mountain and the creek was at the bottom. If we had a dry spell, it would be VERY hard and oftentimes impossible to get running water. We'd have to drive 30 minutes one way to the store and get jugs and just rough it or my dad would have to go down to the bottom of the hill and scrape the well area and Momma would have to turn the pump on and off back up at the top of the hill for each of us maybe to get a trickle to get ready in the morning with a PTA bath - PTA bath, I'll just let y'all guess what PTA stands for. I became really grateful for running water one particular summer when I was taking a shower whilst on my damn period and my dad was having to manage the well and the pump as water came out of the shower head in drops. I shoved a towel in my crotch and prayed to God that we'd get like two more gallons of water and that my dad wouldn't see the bloody towel. But, he did and he was like, "Brooke. Are you bleeding?" I told him I cut myself shaving my legs. To which he responded, "Well, Brooke that's probably not the best idea while we're having a

water shortage.” So, Nowadays while having an anxiety attack, I’ll jump in the shower or the bath and just be grateful for running water. While I was experiencing that moment in the Smokey Mountains of North Carolina, Summer of ‘96, the last thing I was thankful for was running water because it was NOT running. Follow me?

So, I guess, my advice, if you’re asking for it or looking for it, or the moral of the story is that if you’re experiencing anxiety, think of something SIMPLE that you can be grateful for. And, think of that thing that you can ground yourself with that you’re grateful for. Pets, coffee, running water.

And remember gratitude is being thankful for what does exist. Anxiety is creating thoughts about what could or might happen - but what does not necessarily exist.

Focus on WHAT IS and NOT WHAT IF not just this November, but every damn day of the year or every time you experience anxiety.

On that note of gratitude, I am grateful for y’all. According to my Anchor platform where I launch this podcast, my audience as of November 2022 is small but according to me, I say y’all are small but mighty. I appreciate y’all SO much. Y’all keep me keepin’ on. And, I appreciate y’all. Even more than running water.

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

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.

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