

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover **EPISODE #41- Menswear Don't Care**

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...

Menswear Don't Care is the name of this week's episode y'all. I know that those of us female identifying friends have had menswear as part of our fashion routine at various time periods throughout the ages.

For instance, after World War 2, a lot of females had to take on jobs that were primarily male dominated so that influenced the fashion situation. Then Marilyn Monroe started the whole boyfriend jean trend in the 60's but I most remember it all over the GAP a few years ago. But, in MY case menswear began when I hit puberty and started gaining weight and getting boobs and while most guhls go into their mom's and sister's closets to shop and borrow, I went into the closet of none other than HOOVER BOB. My dad. And, it wasn't really a fashion choice it was because I didn't have much of a choice.

See, at the time, no one was really making plus size clothes. At least they weren't mainstream at ALL like they are today. It was like enter through the back door if you're more than a size 12 in the 1990's. Sure, some places had "extended sizes" but they weren't really doing anything to help a plus size person - especially someone in a female plus size body - other than saying, "Well just lose weight in order to fit into our clothes."

Believe me, when I was younger, I actually wanted to have the body shape and metabolism and lack of a period and boobs like many young female athletes. Without realizing all the while that THAT wasn't necessarily healthy either. I will sing this till the cows come home (PUN NOT INTENDED) that just because someone is fat doesn't mean they're unhealthy and just because someone is skinny does NOT mean they ARE instantly healthy. Or balanced. Balanced is the key word here y'all. Speaking of Balance, I need to read the memoir of Dominique Moceanu, remember the famous gymnast? I wanted my body to be like HERS SO MUCH y'all. Genetics alone wouldn't make that happen. And, the fact that I quit gymnastics after two years. I was so ashamed to not just be a chubby child but to be getting boobs and curves on top of it. I went from being the sweet guhl sporting the cute Gitano or Spumoni sets in the late 80's to needing to cover it ALL up in the early 90's almost overnight.

But, I'm not feeling sorry for myself because luckily my dad has STYLE. And, I'm not talking about oh I have my dad's favorite t-shirt that I slept in as a kid. This was well beyond that. I went all up into his wardrobe. And, his wardrobe was pretty fabulous for a straight white man. Preppy and Southern and Hoover Bob fabulous. So fabulous in fact that one of my favorite shirts he owned was a pink (an orange tinted pink, not Who's Dat Phat Girl neon bikini pink) by the brand Ruff Hewn that was waffled and extra thick with a collar. I would wear a white shirt underneath it and BOOM. I didn't have to wear a bra and I was still wearing a "FEMININE COLOR".

I also wore my dad's Patagonia swimming trunks over swimsuits to help with my "chabbies" which if you don't speak Brooke Hoover, chabbies is basically upper thigh chub rub. But, bless my family for primarily going on vacation in the mountains of North Carolina because wearing the Patagonia swimming trunks were not just fully acceptable but totes necessary for white water rafting, sliding down rocks and wrestling bob cats. The Patagonias did have a weird lining in them which I always was curious about and I've since learned it's because that's what's holding in all the "male bits". So, every time I put a pair of my dad's Patagonias on over my swimsuit to hide the chabbies I tried to NOT think about this aspect.

Luckily and not luckily our school uniforms were based in a white collared shirt so I often just borrowed my dad's white button downs which I could allow for a nice blossom as Momma and I call it which is basically when you tuck your shirt into your shorts or SKORT as the EHS uniform requested and then allow for like a parachute effect - and I appreciated this to again hide the boobs, second boobs, fat and shame.

To this day, when I go home, I STILL pack less clothes when I visit my dad because I know when I exercise or just fart around the house with his dog Latte that I can wear one of his T-shirts and Patagonias. In fact, when I was down there a few years ago helping my dad when he lost one of his toes, my aunt and uncle gently tried to coax me out of my menswear.

But, it's become almost like a battle shield and a constant comfort for me. I've evolved it from a necessity and made it a choice.

My menswear could be more of a fashion statement. I could "look better" or wear something "more flattering" but even when I have bought some of those boyfriend jeans at the GAP and tried to go "on trend", the cut didn't work on me. It seems that the menswear trend is only meant for super skinny ladies because the boyfriend jean, the boyfriend shirt, the boyfriend T all just make me look and feel a bit awkward. I'm like give me Hoover Bob's Patagonias any day over all of this.

I think what didn't work for me when I was in a larger body with the whole clothing system for female identifying folks is that for men, for example, your pants and shirt and coat are based on your actual size or measurement FOR THAT ITEM and it

seems between designer, between brand, there is not much variation. Whereas for us guhls, there is a size chart, which varies by designer and it's basically a system dictating that if you're a size 10 you're expected to have like a 36C boob and a 31 inch waist and yet we know female bodies, like fruit (pear, apple shape y'all get it) come in all shapes and sizes. So, the sizing guidelines were always very difficult for me to fit into and understand EVEN IN PLUS SIZE ATTIRE because for me, my top half has always been bigger than my bottom half.

36 - 24 - 36 - only if she's 5'3 AHHHHHH who knows what song I'm talking about? Sir Mixalot. I like big butts. That song came out around the time that I was going through my weight change woes and he's basically saying yeah like THAT measurement combo is really going to happen in real life. And, while my family and I do NOT have big butts. I really took this as my body positive anthem for the 90s while hiding my chub rub in my dad's swim trunks.

I think the whole point is, fashion is antiquated. Especially in our day and age. I'm sick of labeling clothes as "men's" or "women's". I say wear what makes you feel good. If you are a female body who can't pull off the menswear trend (which still mind you, while wearing men's-esque clothing you're still expected to have the cut that shows off your figure that had better be slim) I say WHO CARES. WHO CARES ABOUT TRENDS. Wear what feels right for you. I will also be sharing on the website near the transcription for this episode some genderless brands. I honestly think that's the wave of the future and growing up and growing into a body I didn't yet want to have, I probably would have felt MUCH more comfortable having one of these brands to reach out to.

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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