

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover **EPISODE 7 - Flippin' Tables**

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...

Hey Y'all. It is Brooke and thank you for listening to the Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast. The name of - the name or the title of this episode is Flippin' Table and it's a little homage to where I live in New Jersey because as we know The Real Housewives of New Jersey Theresa Guidice she is known for flippin' tables. I think that was in season one. Gosh I don't know why I'm still watching that show.

But, I want to sing like Les Mis to this show like [breaks into song] Breaking Chairs and Flipping Tables da da da -- I don't know all the words. I really like the play but I forget the words. And, I actually did break some chairs when I was an exchange student in France because let's face it, French people are skinny and the chairs they must make in France which are probably not really made in France were made really cheap. But, yes I have a lot of experience on different kinds of tables. That sounds really weird. There were these workout things that you would do and it was basically like exercising but oh you don't have to exercise. It's easy. You don't even break a sweat. You can do it on a lunch break. Five minutes on six different tables and you're good to go.

So, this was a place I tried back in the late 90's when I was in my teens and the place was appropriately called Inches A Weigh and Weigh was spelled W E I G H. So, I go into my initial intake and I step on the scale. And, the lady, her name was Sonja and she reminded me of a cat and I step on the scale and Sonja goes, "Oh. My. God." Just like that. No poker face or tact or whatever the word is. I was 190 pounds. And, I remember when I got heavier; I kept wishing that I would be just 190 pounds. But, you're not supposed to say that especially at a place that I'm paying or at the time my parents are paying probably a lot of money for me to lose weight.

So, the tables. Okay they're basically like these gigantic very heavy, very expensive things that you lay on and they're supposed to tone and work your body. Now, here's the deal. I think the tables would be wonderful for people who have very limited mobility. There was one table - my favorite one actually that you lay on and you hold the bars. It's like you're kind of being racked you know like a Medieval Torture Device

But, it's actually really feels good. So, your waist is actually where the table moves back and forth. So, your legs are on a rotating table that's going back and forth like a pendulum but the top part of you is staying in one position and that is supposed to tone your waist. Or you can flip and do it the other way where you're face down where your head is going back and forth like a pendulum and the back part of you stays straight. I don't get how that's supposed to help you lose weight.

Then, there were other ones where you would go and the leg parts would move so it'd be one table that you would lay on but the leg parts would move and one of the best tables you did nothing. It was at the very end and I guess it was the equivalent to like shavasana of the tables. You just [laughs] lay on it and it vibrates like one of those vibrating hotel beds and it...it was fun but you don't even break a sweat. And, I became really good friends with one of the trainers because obviously when you're just really sitting on your butt exercising to tables, they have to have trainers for you and I think the trainer could kind of tell like, "Uh this is bogus. But, I also need a job and Foxy's isn't hiring." Foxy's, y'all, is - it was - is - I don't know if it's still around - I think it's still around is like a privately owned gym back home that everybody went to. So, the trainer's name was Ashley and you could kind of tell that she thought the place was a little bit bogus but she really liked me. We clicked, we connected. And, at the very back of the table place there was this kind of...crappy treadmill. It's kind of sad all the car- car - cawdio - whoa. All the cardio equipment was kind of out by the way side.

But, Ashley would say, "Okay. Brooke. You're going to stay for an extra thirty minutes and I'm gonna talk to you. We're just gonna chill, talk and you're going to do the treadmill." And, I loved Ashley for that because I think she realized there wasn't much work going on on the tables. The actual work was put in doing the walking. But, I did like the ritual of it all. I liked the kind of lulling to sleep sound of the tables [makes a calming yet mechanical noise] It was fun. And, I would leave the table place and it was one of these brick buildings - it looked kind of like it had its prime in 1989 but it was ten years later, 1999 and it was almost past its prime and there was K&B which is a popular Louisiana or was a popular Louisiana pharmacy back home with the purple. And, they had the best ice cream.

So, I would always say, "No, you're not going for KB ice cream. You just exercised on the tables." And, then you know what? I realized Inches A Weigh and Sonja and Ashley, they weren't my first experience on tables. Way back when in the early 80's my Maw Maw, Maw Maw Leona, she went to this place out in Denham Springs which is kind of like or it was kind of, it's kind of very suburban now. It was kind of like out in the country. And, she had a friend named Miss Janelle and several other ladies and they also had a table place. It was a bunch of older ladies. It was this you know pastel kind of wood siding kind of contemporary looking building that was really popular in the 80's and it usually had like a very useless courtyard. Well, it was one of these buildings out kind of in the middle of the country and I loved going there. They would just like put me on a table and give me like some zucchini bread and I would just sit on that table and go to town. So, it's just really funny that that's where

I ended back up over ten, fifteen years later to try to lose weight. And, obviously it didn't work but it was just such nostalgia. I remember the zucchini bread it kind of tasted like cardboard. And, then one time, Maw Maw told me, "Hey Brooke, they got a new shipment in." And they - Miss Janelle and her friends had gotten this new shipment of like these lemon cookies.

They tasted like a softer chewier chewier? Chewier. They tasted like a softer, chewier, lemony cardboard. And, they were so good. And, if I can sit back in that moment. I remember two moments very vividly well actually three. Talking to Ashley on the treadmill. Sonja and me stepping on the scale and 190 and her going, "Oh. God." And me sitting, kind of cross legged style going back and forth on the pendulum part of the table and Maw Maw's friend, Miss Janelle's place eating some lemon cardboard cookies. Boy, y'all. All the things we did back in the 80's to try to lose weight. Eight Minute Abs. The Thigh Master. Eight Minute Abs was actually awesome. Then I had this one thing it looked like a rocket ship and it had like a weight like kind of a pressure that you would put on your stomach to do abdominal exercises. I actually really wish I still had that. That would probably really work well. Of course Richard Simmons Sweatn' to the Oldies. Wonderful. Or should I say "tubular" or maybe "rad"? I say rad a lot. Yeah, those things were really...rad.

But, something I did in recent years - and it also involves a table, hence the name "flippin' tables" - for the past about fifteen years, I have been going to acupuncture. The very first time I did it, it was because I was having back pain. And, I happened upon somehow I don't know cause this was before Googling things or Google Mapping things became a thing. I think I saw a sandwich board outside of a building. That's what we used to do back in the day, y'all. Look at a sandwich board. So, I go in and the lady her name was Mary. She did some wonderful acupuncture on me. My back pain got better almost instantly and then two days later I felt like utter garbage. I felt horrible. And, my roommate at the time, love my roommate. She was from England. And, she said - I'm going to do a very bad Cockney accent so pardon me but I have to do her accent [Brooke does a bad Cockney accent] "Me mum said - me mum--" Actually that sounds like my dog Archer's voice cause my dog Archer's also British. But, anyways so my roommate says [Brooke does a bad Cockney accent], "My mom's a acupuncturist back in England. She can talk to you love about how you're feeling because this might be normal." So, I did talk to her mom after my first acupuncture appointment.

And, I said, "I feel horrible. I feel like I have a flu. What's going on? My back pain feels better but otherwise I feel really, really junky. What's going on?" And, she was just like [Brooke does a bad Cockney accent], "Well acupuncture kind of relieves all the toxic" how do you say that word, y'all?

"Acupuncture kind of relieves all the toxic- toxic- toxcity." Oh gosh. "Acupuncture kind of relieves all the toxic vibes in you so it's quite normal to feel flu like." So, I kept on with acupuncture. Sometimes for the back pain especially for the lower tail

bone area cause [Sing song voice] I had a fall when I was little. So, that area acts up a lot of times. I had a fall, I said. Of course to every single doctor it's [sing song meets robot voice] because I'm overweight that I have back pain. Thank you robot man.

But, moxa so adding a little bit of heat to it and moxa's like an herb that you burn. It smells...it smells kind of like...church and a pot den-- do pot den's exist? Well that's what moxa smells like. I really like it and I like it for its healing purposes not necessarily for its smell of course.

And, also of course sometimes they'll make the needles jump like the needles will have electric stimulation and that really helps. So, acupuncture became my main thing. So, I said, "Hey, if it's working for my back, I guess it will work, could it work for my hormonal issues? For weight loss?" So, Mary, my acupuncturist in Brooklyn started treated me, I would go religiously every other week, sometimes once a week, sometimes once a month. She was great about working with me on sliding scale because not all acupuncture is affordable. And, then I had to move from Brooklyn to Jersey and I started going to an acupuncture school. Actually Harry and I would go to the acupuncture school almost every weekend together. It was more inexpensive and they had a better cancelation policy so obviously when you're an actor, hey, cheaper is better and also having a very flexible schedule that doesn't charge you if you have to cancel, that's even better, too.

And, one time when I was at the acupuncture school, they told me, "Hey, there's this thing called the Grand Rounds and it's actually free." And, of course my ears perk up like, "Free? Free health and wellness? Free acupuncture? What is the Grand Rounds?" And they're like, "it's this thing where you basically get acupuncture and you are observed by a lot of different students." And, I'm thinking, "Hey, I do standardized patient all the time. The acupuncture clinic I'm already going to with you guys, like two or three students are there. Mind you, you were in a small little curtained off room. But, I'm like, "Yeah. I'll do the Grand Rounds"

So, I go in to the Grand Rounds and it's this guy who looks like he might be one of those lawyers on a billboard not somebody I would connect with on any sort of basis like I think acupuncture is something that it's important that the person who is healing you essentially. It's not like - a lot of people think acupuncture is just plain bogus. It is Eastern Medicine. It's based on the Meridians of your body lining up. It's not anything to believe in. Okay? It's not a religion. Okay. But, anyways. This man I just wasn't feeling his vibe like he looked like he should be cutting people's fingers off in a mafia ring not doing acupuncture and that's very judgmental of me and I'm the first person to hate to be judged as we know but hey sorry. That is life. Such is life.

So, I go in and it's about 40 students. I kid y'all not. And, I get on the acupuncture table. And, we start talking about some of my issues: Weight loss. Back Pain. Hormonal Issues. Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. All those sexy things that come with it: Irregular periods. Hair on my face. You know, moodiness. Anxiety. Fat around the

abdominum. Abdomium. [Laughs] Abdomen. All stuff like that. And, so he starts poking me - well with the needles - he starts putting the needles in me and I'm just feeling very exposed and vulnerable and like oh this...something just doesn't feel right. And, maybe my Qi was lining up. Maybe my Qi wasn't lining up.

And, then he has me flip over and I'm like okay this is good. This is good. I'm feeling like I'm fixing to cry because it's just a lot for me. Oh like woe is me. But, it's a lot. So, I start crying a little bit. But, my crying manifests more as a big hunk of snot coming out of my nose. So, [laughs] I'm sure everybody can see me. It's not like I was sick. The mucus was clear. Not yellow. That's a very acupuncture thing to look at like your tongue for example. I'm sure if they're going to look at your tongue before a session, they would also be concerned about your mucus color. I know my mom used to be when I would get sick when I was little.

But, anyways so I'm laying face down and snot just starts coming out my nose, my eyes, I'm obviously crying. And, I felt super embarrassed. And, basically he got the needles out, I walked out of there, I ran out of there. I didn't necessarily feel better after that session and I stopped going to that school. And, I said, "I need to find a good acupuncturist."

So, I got really lucky. This lady who I talked to, a spiritual healer in Jersey City, she said, "Hey you know there's like this saliva test you can do and I can even read it for you. Ship off, get the saliva test and I'll read it for you and I'll help you figure out what's going on with your hormones." So, I hit her up about and she basically played dumb like she never told me she would help me with it but I'm like "Hey. Cool. Fine. Take ownership or don't say you're going to do something and then not do it." But, she did recommend me to the most wonderful acupuncturist in the world well second most because now I have a different one who's equally awesome.

So, this acupuncturist he was just a nice, down to earth guy, Jersey guy. I would joke. He would say [Jersey accent] "Are you drinking enough water?" and I would say, "Oh there's that Jersey accent." But, I totally felt comfortable sharing my hormonal issues and my weight loss woes with him because he really created a safe space. On my first meeting, I was really trying to hold it together and second meeting I go in and I just start crying and sobbing and say, "I just want to feel normal. I just want to feel right." And, he's like "Word." I don't think he actually said, "Word." But he was like, "I feel you." So, I told him obviously I'm trying to do everything I can health-wise and just feeling like nothing's quite connecting. I just feel tired. I just don't feel right. And, yes I did say you know of course, "I want to lose weight." But, that wasn't the biggest thing. I remember saying, "Yeah. Of course losing weight would be nice but mainly I just want to feel better." So, a couple um I think it was a day or two later, he texts me and then he calls me and he's like, "Look I've been thinking a lot about this. I've been thinking a lot about what's going on with you. And, most people I wouldn't tell to go on such a restrictive eating plan. But, I know you're hard core. I know you can handle it. I think you should go on the Paleo plan to really help eliminate sugar, processed foods, carbs, bad carbs--" Well Paleo eliminates all carbs. And, It thought

that was really nice of him. Because, it was like he really cared and the thing with acupuncture you don't want to just be getting acupuncture and then go you know feed your body with unhealthy foods. If you're devoting this much time to acupuncture you have to be devoting your whole lifestyle, right? And, the Paleo diet really, really, really helped. This acupuncturist, he helped me with so many things. He became a close friend of mine. He came to a film festival of mine. He came to the opening fundraiser for our web series Pageant Pom Mom, just very supportive and then shortly into the pandemic we get a note from him that he is moving. And, it was a positive for him because he was moving to a much more beautiful area of the country, Ithaca area of New York. I'm getting choked up because I remember just thinking, "It took me so long to find this acupuncturist who I knew for seven years, who treated me, who helped me through so much. And, who am I going to find?"

Well, like by the grace of God, I found another acupuncturist who I still go to now Erin Kumpf Acupuncture and Herbs. And, I love her to death. I think her style is wonderful. She also teaches Qi Gong and she and my former acupuncturist, they went to acupuncture- excuse me, they went to Herb College together. And, I told somebody that. They were like, "Um, there's a such thing as herb college?" And, I'm like, "Yes there is." I just still don't understand why people knock and make jokes about alternative healing. And, hey I like a good joke. A good joke is funny. But, I'm also like, "Don't knock it till you've tried it, peeps." So, I one day hope to have my acupuncturist on here to talk and tell tales but, there is no real full circle or happy ending of this story because I'm still an on-going experiment. I just do know that I am kind of digging feeling like I am a human Voo Doo doll. There y'all. I had to segue way it back to New Orleans and Louisiana somehow. Thanks so much for listening.

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 0'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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