

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover **SEASON 2 EPISODE #13- Worth The Weight**

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...

At this point y'all may be thinking, "Brooke your podcast isn't really about weight loss tips, I want weight loss tips." Well, I focus on the more holistic side of things by taking care of your body and if your body needs to shed some of its weight, by managing what we're eating, doing physically and telling ourselves mentally from a more positive standpoint, then the weight loss will happen when and if we are in balance. That sounds great in theory. It isn't always so easy. There are plenty of places that promise you you'll get "results" or "rapid weight loss" - for so long fat loss and weight loss have been marketed as what we need to do to get healthy. But we haven't really focused on what we are gaining. And, yes there is that term "gains" which makes no sense to me because it sounds like an oxymoron though I'm not a moron - I know that the term "gains" means like muscle mass and tone it just bothers me because it sounds like it was a term made up by a fraternity brother. And, to any fraternity brothers out there listening to this here podcast (I'm sure there are a lot of you), I mean no offense.

I digress. But, y'all, if you solely focus on weight loss, you are likely missing out on nutritional content and the only thing you're gaining is mental anguish and hence maybe more weight because stress, cortisol and all of that when they're elevated, it makes it really hard to lose weight.

I wanted to share my trajectory with y'all as I have been asked, it's kind of like one of my FAQ's and I am sharing this in hopes it may help y'all with your journey. As we know, I'm not a doctor and I don't YET play one on TV, so this is one person's experience of losing 100 pounds without any medications or fads.

I should also let y'all know, losing 100 pounds has taken me approximately TWENTY years. And it's stayed off. The first thing we need to realize is, whether you have a chronic condition like I do (Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome) or NOT, entering the health and wellness realm will at first be something you do because you almost feel like you should or must be doing it, but eventually, it WILL become part of your life. One of the terms out there that I actually buy into is "lifestyle change" as opposed to diet. That's some of the bait I am taking because it's the truth.

My momma actually first introduced the South Beach Diet (which again should be called the South Beach Lifestyle Change) to me when she was doing her plethora of dial up internet researching for me and before any doctor, she figured out all my symptoms might mean I have Polycystic Ovarian Syndrome. She learned that the South Beach Lifestyle Change would be ideal for someone like me for its higher in lean protein and vegetable content over added or refined sugars. In a nutshell, the South Beach Lifestyle Change is the Mediterranean diet and that's still how I eat to this day.

I started out my first few days of the South Beach Lifestyle change in the mountains of North Carolina before I ate eggs (which was one of the few foods you could eat) working my way through weeks one and two, the hardest weeks because that's when you're completely withdrawing from sugar, even sugar from fruit. It's more like a less calcium-tastic, less fatty tastic style of eating as compared to Keto or Atkins. My moods changed like a beast. I was ravenous for sugar - or even for a potato but after about five days, I remember feeling so much better, clearer headed, even. And, my momma didn't even have a scale so I couldn't measure my weight. Which I think is a great thing.

After about a month, I went back to my apartment in Brooklyn and God bless so many of my friends most specifically Missy and Josh who were right on board with my lifestyle change and made brown rice stuff peppers with me (as, at this point, I could start adding back in grains like brown rice, quinoa and sweet potatoes). I noticed I was walking up the four flights of my best friend Brian and my apartment with a bit more ease. And, speaking of taking public transit as opposed to driving made a huge difference. I believe I lost nearly 20 pounds or so in 3 months. I really don't know because I don't remember tracking my weight on a scale in Brooklyn - I don't know that one existed at our apartment and honestly it was for the better because I noticed I was feeling better, I was more mindful of what I was eating, schlepping and taking public transit were a lot easier and, most importantly, it seemed my PCOS symptoms were getting a lot more manageable - mainly my periods were becoming more regular, even though I was still on prescription meds for PCOS at that point in time.

Something else I did was join the YMCA in Brooklyn. And I LOVED that place. I would walk a good 3/4 of a mile one way and then 3/4 of a mile back because finding parking was too hard, so I was getting in some exercise while en route to exercise. It was great. I didn't have much money to spend on eating out or drinking out a lot, so it was kind of a win-win that that was off the table, too.

I still don't remember if I'd bought a scale at that point but I did sometimes use the one at the Y and I had surely lost at least 50 or so pounds at that point. But, then of course plateaus happen and they happened around the same time I moved to New Jersey and I drove my car a bit more and took public transportation a lot less. It's not like I didn't try to do public transportation. I bought a bike - I drove an hour to Paramus to buy one and shoved it into my Mustang at the time only to nearly get

killed on it a week later when an aggressive driver in a Range Rover called me a bitch and nearly ploughed me over. I sold the bike 10 days later. Don't worry, I flipped it and made \$45 profit.

I joined a bougie snobby gym that I had to drive to but that had a great pool and a good rate for those using the gym at "off peak" hours. But I noticed that when I would over exercise I would get hungrier and I'd eat more. I didn't lose weight but, I hit another plateau and then I noticed the scale was going up again.

I had to quit the gym because I couldn't justify affording it or spending 30 minutes to commute less than a mile because of traffic and looking for a parking space. I gained more time and sanity and started doing more YouTube exercise videos at home including yoga. And, this is what I also want to say to y'all, exercise is NOT always about pushing yourself or going until you're exhausted. That mentality and actually physicality of doing nothing but cardio or pushing yourself can raise your cortisol levels and again, make weight loss hard - or reverse weight loss. So, focusing on adding in Yoga, Pilates and other physical elements that had a less push-push-push vibe to them I think also helped me start losing more weight.

I also started doing acupuncture again after meeting a fabulous acupuncturist through a lady who did healing work and said she'd help me do this hormone spit test reading thing - where you spit into a vial for a month and it tells you which hormones are off - but then she went MIA on me and then just recommended me to an acupuncturist which was probably the best thing she could have done. The acupuncturist named Joe spent nearly an hour and a half with me during my first session and learned of all my struggles with PCOS symptoms and triumphs with managing them with lifestyle changes and without medication but Joe understood my frustration when I told him, I eat healthy, I exercise and yet, I've been at this plateau for a WHILE. Joe read my readings from the hormonal spit test, because that's the thing right, it's important to look at your hormone levels when you're having endocrine difficulties and all the spit test did was dry my mouth out, take up room in my freezer and tell us that my cortisol was only slightly elevated. A better test was a somewhat standard blood test learning that my thyroid levels, while according to my doctor or any doctor as being in normal range, but according to an acupuncturist or a nutritionist or any less Western, not covered by insurance health practitioner that you'll meet were still out of whack in that normal range.

Joe worked to help my thyroid function as I was always super close to hypothyroidism, which would explain my difficulty in losing weight, and even, my propensity to having PCOS in the first place. One afternoon, Joe told me, look I know I'd told you don't do any hardcore diet or lifestyle change - again. But, I think you're hardcore enough to do it and I think it will really help these symptoms. I think you should do Paleo based eating. I don't mean go looking at all those Paleo desserts with dates and maple syrup on Pinterest and I don't mean go eat a rib eye every night, but look at those principals. I think they're up your alley and I think it will really help you and most importantly, I don't tell many of my patients to do it

because I don't want to set them up for failure, but you, you can do it.

And do it, I did. I always like a challenge and I always like when people believe in me. But more importantly than that, yes I wanted to lose weight, but more so I wanted to feel better. And, I had gotten a little lapsidical in my South Beach Lifestyle change. I ate omelet cups and sweet potatoes with cinnamon for breakfast, roasted vegetables and chicken or fish for lunch and dinner. And, when I was hard core, hard core, I don't remember really snacking - this was before you could find a plethora of Paleo snacks at like Costco but, honestly, when you want to make a change (oh I feel a Michael Jackson moment coming on) you can't just change what you eat but also how you're eating. And, I know that I'm a BIG snacker. To this day I'm a snacker. And, the more you snack, the more you want. The Paleo lifestyle was making me focus more on heartier filling foods so I didn't need to snack. I mean, tell me if Ugh and Grunt back in the Paleo age were like "Ugh just wrestled Woolly Mammoth. now Ugh need a granola bar." No. Ugh knew a granola bar just wouldn't get him through because that granola bar has a lot of added and refined sugars (usually, unless they're Paleo but in the real Paleo age Paleo style granola bars didn't exist.)

Then, I hit another plateau and just started feeling a little heavy - more so mentally and physically than literally. And, a friend on set, Ira, told me about an APP he was using called LOSE IT. And, at first I was like, "Well, I don't want to be involved in any negative diet stuff." But I thought I would USE IT to LOSE IT - kidding - I thought I would USE LOSE IT to monitor what I was eating. And, what I realized is that even though I was eating healthy, highly nutritious foods, I was taking in between 2000 - 2200 calories a day, which for my height and weight activity level and desired weight was just too much.

So, the LOSE IT app (they aren't sponsoring this podcast, by the way) helped me lose another 20-30 pounds or so. And, then March 13, 2020 happened. And, quarantine began. And, I remember everyone saying "Oh I'm gonna gain so much weight being at home." And I woke up one morning like, "I am not drinking this Kool-Aid even if it is sugar free and Paleo friendly." First off, I wasn't on sets anymore, and craft foodservice is ALWAYS where I overeat. It goes back to my college days of food scarcity where I, like a Paleo person, feel the need to stock pile and save and sometimes overeat the most random stuff - even if it's healthy. I was at home and food was limited at grocery stores, my momma has asthma, so we were only doing delivery, meat was expensive and I was out of work, so I relied on overnight oats and eating less meat and less food in general (because again, my food scarcity kicked in) But I did NOT feel deprived because I focused on eating as healthy as possible because I wanted good gut health for good immune health so I wouldn't get COVID.

Also, at that same time, a new friend I met online named Deby started an exercise program that I've talked about before on this here podcast called BUFF HUSSY - she has YouTube videos - I did her classes five days a week - which were a combo of Yoga and HIIT and often had a theme including a Cinco De Mayo theme inspired by

her Mexican heritage and it was just FUN. I wasn't obsessed with weight loss at all, I was obsessed with staying healthy so I wouldn't get COVID.

And, I lost 35 pounds during a pandemic when most people said we'd all gain weight. And, most people did and most of those people beat themselves up for losing weight and it's like y'all, WHY?!?!? Why?!?!? Instead of weight loss or gain, let's focus on HEALTH GAIN and the weight loss will follow. Like that sound - free your mind and the rest will follow.

And, in my case, if the weight loss doesn't follow, and if that's your goal, then investigate what's going on behind closed doors that could be contributing to that block - mentally or physically. Talk to your doctor or healthcare peeps, like I did. I can tell ya, there's no magic weight loss pill out there. I did try some from some touted by Dr. Oz to one (called Meridia) prescribed by my doctor or Alli recommended by another doctor. They did NOT work. They just made me racy, experience more anxiety and have very very loose stool. In that order. So, don't take the magic pill.

Weight loss really just works by input and output, it's mathematics. Less calories, more exercise BUT make sure what we are putting in our bodies is of high nutritional value and make sure what we are putting in our minds is high kindness to ourselves value. At this point, health and wellness isn't a chore, it isn't something I have to do, it's part of me (cheesy to say) and it's fun. It's SO much fun that I have a podcast about it.

Y'all, I'm always happy to answer questions. So, feel free to email me at whosdatphatgirl@gmail.com or check me out on Instagram at @br00keh00ver 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 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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