

Transcript for The Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast - With Brooke Hoover
EPISODE #25 - PCOS Cysters and Intermittent Fasting with Special Guest SHAELE

BROOKE:

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 everybody. It's the Who's Dat Phat Girl Podcast. And we have a special guest today. Her name is Shaele and we actually discovered found each other, on Facebook on a podcasters' group. And I'm really glad that Shaele reached out to me. And, it turns out we have a big, among many other bonds that we shared talking in the past maybe three weeks or so, one of our biggest bonds is that we both have PCOS, polycystic ovarian syndrome. And I have seen it in places called PCOS Cysters. Y'all get the pun intended, which I mean is a little cheesy, but we're going to, we're going to go with it. So Shaele, why don't you tell everybody a little bit about yourself, whatever you want to tell us. I mean, aside from what we're going to be talking about today.

SHAELE:

Yeah. So, hello. I am Shaele. I usually lead with like, I'm a mom to a seven year old because that's what I usually identify with, but I am trying really hard to lead with other things now. So, I am a sourdough baker outside of my, you know, quote day job, which, I work for myself. I am an online business manager and tech VA. That keeps me busy. Then I bake sourdough in my free time. I was diagnosed with PCOS when I was like 19, in college and at the time, like, I knew I wanted to have babies and that definitely changed my life. So. I'm sure we'll get into all of that, but, that is me.

BROOKE:

Awesome! And we were diagnosed, like, pretty much right around the same time, which is really funny, strange, not funny, haha, but I do love that. You're a sourdough baker! I love sourdough bread. They used to have it at Cracker Barrel. I don't know if y'all have it in your neck of the woods because Shaele is completely across the country in Portland, the Portland area.

SHAELE:

Yeah, just outside of Portland.

BROOKE:

Do you have Cracker Barrels there?

SHAELE:

So we got our first Cracker Barrel, ironically, in the middle of COVID, I've never gone because it's like, it's like 15 miles away, which is a good like half hour, 45 minutes. I'm like, I don't know if I'm wanting to drive that far for a restaurant. So we only have one that I know of there's probably more in like Southern Oregon, but, um, here in the Portland area, there's just the one.

BROOKE:

Hey, because I'm sure y'all have a lot of other good restaurants where you're like, they're like, please, we just need one cracker barrel on the side of the interstate. That's it. Let's keep it moving. But they, they used to make, they used to have like sourdough bread loaves for sale back in the day. That's like really just a shame that that's like my first thing that I think of. But then also I think of San Francisco, I know there's a link with sourdough bread in San Francisco.

SHAELE:

Yeah, San Francisco is known for their sourdough. People say that, like, the taste of sourdough from San Francisco is very, very specific, but sourdough from anywhere that you get it is specific because sourdough is literally, like, the hyper local yeast in the air that it's growing in. People that make sourdough in Italy, their sourdough is going to, it's not going to be totally different, but like, you're going to taste differences between their sourdough and sourdough that I make here in the Pacific Northwest.

BROOKE:

And I was about to say your sourdough is Shaele specific or Shaele Pacific. I know I like the puns. I'm a 42 year old girl. I, why am I doing dad jokes? But like, for some reason, like I just started doing dad jokes during the pandemic.

SHAELE:

I love dad jokes. Um, my daughter, she's seven, almost eight, and she's started making her own dad jokes. She'll even, like, laugh at her own jokes if no one else is laughing at

them and, like, point out how funny they were. Um, and I don't know if I'm very proud or--

BROOKE:

You should be very proud. She'll always entertain herself. Like, I'm an only child, so she'll always have herself to entertain, so that's a good thing. I mean, my boyfriend laughs at his own jokes as well. And he turned out just fine. Kind of. So, Shaele, let's tell some tales, let's dive in, as they say. So, you told us when you were diagnosed with polycystic ovarian syndrome. And just to fill everybody in on polycystic ovarian syndrome, if y'all listen to the Who's Dat Phat Girl podcast, um, if you're a friend of Brooke, a friend of Shaele, you probably know what PCOS is. But if you don't, just in case. In general, as I always say, I'm not a doctor. I don't even play one on TV. Shaele and I are not doctors, but we are people who have experienced PCOS, which I don't know if I've ever met a doctor of mine who has experienced PCOS. So we are pretty much experts because we are living with this every day. So PCOS is an endocrine disorder. It is basically regulated your systems regulated by your thyroid. So a lot of the symptoms are hormonal, mimicking, like I don't want to say they're mimicking like perimenopause, but some symptoms are similar to that in that, you know, sometimes you grow hair on your face instead of hair on your head. And Shaele and I were just talking about, we're lucky that we have hair on our heads because some PCOS friends, they, um, have some, um, male pattern baldness because you were producing too much testosterone. Your body cannot channel that insulin. So you have to be very careful about developing type two diabetes, et cetera. Having children's very hard. Losing weight is very hard. Two things with PCOS that are very hard to do that are very, very, very, part of, I would say being. So it's a really shitty disease to have for our demographic, being that we're female, because sometimes it makes you feel not so pretty. Hence phat girl costumes, hence who's dat phat girl trying to always find the pretty hot and tempting despite the crappy symptoms. Shaele, you were diagnosed around when you were 19. And so tell me how do you, how did you feel like you had it? Did you feel you had it? How did you know you had it? What brought you to discovering that you had it?

SHAELE:

Yeah, um, so I was in college and I had changed, um, from like a pediatrician to like my first female adult doctor. Um, and. I don't know if she was just like really progressive at the time or what, but she had a specific focus in women's health and women's, um, like struggles of like hormone imbalances. Um, so she actually brought it up to me when I had met with her. I was talking about how I couldn't lose weight despite like doing weight watchers, like bike riding. Um, cause I lived on campus. So I was riding my bike all across campus and like, I wasn't losing weight at all. Nothing was changing. Um, so we did like lots of blood tests and ruled things out like diabetes. Since that is something that

my mom's mom had and my dad's mom. So that was like the first question was, is this diabetes? So we did blood tests and when she told me it was PCOS, like, I'd never heard of it. I didn't know what it was, but when I started researching, my first question was like, can I have kids? Like, I was 19. I had just gotten engaged to my now ex husband, um, but we were freshly engaged. Like, we knew we wanted to have kids in life, and now I have this huge looming question of, can I have kids? Because everything I'm reading on, you know, Reddit at the time is saying. I'm 35-40. We've been trying for 10 years and we can't get pregnant. We've done IVF. We've done all of the things. And we've now gotten to the point of like, we're done trying. So it was definitely like an eye opening discovery of a disease in me because, you know, 19 is really young to be diagnosed. Yeah. And it made a lot of sense, but it also was like, shit, why me? Yeah. Like I, yes, I see that I'm overweight, but I also am like, why can't it be an easy solution? Why can't, why does it have to be something so difficult?

BROOKE:

Mm-Hmm. . Yeah. Did it feel like it gave you though a little bit of, I mean, everybody's using this term nowadays. So I will too. Did it feel like it gave you like a little bit of grace in that it's like, it's, it's okay. I'm not losing weight. It's not that weight loss is hard because I'm a, you know, shitty crappy, you know, bad person, which is what I used to tell myself. Um, it's because I have an issue that's making it 20 times harder to lose weight and then carrying that weight makes the symptoms worse. So it's kind of like a, yeah. A cycle, like a double edged sword, if you will. Did it make you feel any better?

SHAELE:

Yeah, it made me feel a little bit better in knowing that, like, It wasn't something that I could restrict my calories of and, like, essentially eat my way out of, right? Like, eating a salad every day for every single meal isn't going to dissipate the symptoms. It also, like, was the two puzzle pieces finally fitting together to explain so many things that I was having of irregular periods, right? Like, there's nothing worse than being in college and having an irregular period.

BROOKE:

Did you all have communal bathrooms? We had communal bathrooms at the end of the hallway.

SHAELE:

So the dorm that I lived in, um, every two rooms shared a bathroom.

BROOKE:

Okay. So that was nice. Yeah. That's more humane.

SHAELE:

But it's still not easy, you know? But so it was like. Like, well shit is this like an irregular period or am I pregnant somehow like, exactly. Oh my god, like I don't remember drinking that much.

BROOKE:

Right, right, right.

SHAELE:

You know, and, and then it's like that crazy feeling of like, what the hell. Um, I pretty much immediately started on Metformin, um, and that was like a whirlwind experience. It did not help me at all. Um, it made me like violently ill every time I took it, even like tapering down doses.

BROOKE:

What was it? Stomach issues? One of my best friends is on it and, um, or was on it and it gave her incredibly bad stomach issues.

SHAELE:

Yeah. So, uh, yeah, I mean, like it, it definitely like give me some validation of I'm not crazy and what I'm struggling with.

BROOKE:

Yeah. I think that's like the big thing. It's like, no, we're not crazy. It's something like, I, a lot of times, like when there's an illness or disease, you know, people need to realize why people, people say, be kind to everyone because we don't know what somebody is going through. And it's very true, you know? And I know, you know, it's not like, thank God we don't have, I mean, Uh, you know, cancer or something like that, right? Um, yeah, I am able to walk, but we're still carrying with us the, these things and it might, we might look all right, but you know, symptom wise, my symptoms have become more like mental issues, if you will, or a bit, a bad symptom for me, um, was always like the facial hair. So I don't know if you ever experienced any of those kinds of symptoms as well.

SHAELE:

Yes, definitely. Like, I don't get, you know, like a full beard or mustache or things like that, but like the long, thick, dark hair that just grows overnight. Yeah. Like, and, and I just, I go like this and I can feel it and it's just like. No matter how many times, you know, I pluck it out or whatever, it's, they're always coming in. Um, just having like hairier arms, um, it, it makes me feel less feminine.

BROOKE:

Yeah. Same. I agree. I agree. And it's basically everything society has told you. You need to be, to be. a perfect box. Pretty person. PCOS slaps you against all that, you know, and it's just like a lot of effort. Like, I mean, I joke, but like, I look like a normal person, but I have done so much like beauty stuff, but I don't really like tell people that cause that's not my brand, you know? I've spent so much time like at the estheticians for, um, laser hair removal and electrolysis, and it's just. It's maddening. Electrolysis, though, is slowly starting to finally work, but that's good. Yeah. So that's good. But you know what? That's an aesthetic thing. I think one thing that, um, we will circle back to that's very a positive thing is that You were able to get pregnant in spite of having PCOS, which is one of the hardest things people struggle with. That was one of your biggest worries. So how about tell us a little bit of a tale about that and how about give us like maybe a little timeline and we'll probably segue into the, the other thing we're going to talk about here, which you already know, but give us a little timeline. How did that happen? Yeah, so we know how it happened. We know where babies come from.

SHAELE:

So, when my ex husband and I, um, graduated from college, we, um, Um, got married and then we started talking about starting a family. Um, we both had like good paying jobs, which looking back, I'm like, shit, they really weren't that good paying. At the time they were, they felt it. The time they were, yes. Um, so this is, I graduated 2014. So this is, uh, early 2015. Um, we were like, we're going to try and get pregnant now. When I first was diagnosed with PCOS, my mom started having a lot of clicking for herself of like, does she have PCOS? Because so many of the symptoms that I have, she also has, and also struggled with. And one of the things that she had mentioned to me at one point is that when she had my older brother, he's four years older than me, her and my dad tried getting pregnant relatively soon afterwards, and it took them four years to get pregnant. It wasn't until my mom went on birth control and then went off birth control that they immediately got pregnant with me.

BROOKE:

I've heard of that happening.

SHAELE:

So, after that, uh, my mom, I don't know if she went back on birth control and then immediately went off of it and had my younger brother, but, um, my younger brother, is only like 16 months younger than I am. So he and I are very close in that fertility window. Um, so when my ex husband and I decided we're going to try and start our family now, I was already on birth control to help regulate my period and help regulate some of the symptoms. I was like, okay, this is when I'm going off birth control. This is our, like, we have like a, you know, 30 day window, really. To conceive. Otherwise, I have to go, I need to go back on birth control and restart this whole process. Yeah, um, I went off birth control like, uh, March 31st, April 1st kind of thing. And, I had a positive pregnancy test, like May 5th. Oh, so it was an immediate, um, conception.

BROOKE:

Wow. That's wonderful.

SHAELE:

It was. And I mean, like, my daughter's delivery was rather traumatic, but none of it was related to PCOS, which is good. She was just dramatic, which is no surprise because she still is dramatic. That's how she is. She's a dramatic type of person. Yes. Like, the world revolves around her and like she lets everyone know that she's phat. Well, she's too young to be fat with the pH, but you know, theoretically she's PHAT right?

BROOKE:

Yes. That's, that's really awesome. Shaele and congratulations because again, it's, it's hard enough as it is. And it's hard, even harder with PCOS. I just want people to really understand that.

SHAELE:

Yeah. And I, we were very lucky that I got pregnant pretty much immediately. Um, and I recognize that that's not the case for so many women that have PCOS, but I also, I'm like, I was 23 when I gave birth to her and so many women don't try to have a baby until they're 30, 35, right? Where, you know, your old age.

BROOKE:

Yep. Yep.

SHAELE:

Um, so I, I know that I had like age on my side of being younger and knowing what I was up against to try and get pregnant as quickly as possible.

BROOKE:

Were you on taking any supplements or doing anything lifestyle wise to kind of like, say like, screw you PCOS, I'm going to get pregnant? Or was it, do you think the missing piece, what worked really was the birth control and then going off of it?

SHAELE:

I think the missing piece was going on birth control and then going off of it. I was on metformin at the same time and I continued taking metformin up until like 17 weeks, I think, but I had really bad morning sickness pretty much from the time I had a positive test until I gave birth. So I lost like 30 pounds in my pregnancy. Whoa. Yeah, it was crazy. Whoa. I pretty much could keep down like nacho Lunchables. Yeah. Um, and zucchini. That was like. That's so random. Yeah. Um, so, whoa. That was, and like, it wasn't related to my PCOS or anything. It's just Right. Like I said, she's dramatic. Yeah. She's, and she likes nacho Lunchables and zucchini. Clearly.

BROOKE:

That's so, that's funny. So she and Shaele that I think you're, I mean, I'm not a mom, but my mom is a mom. You're a mom and you know, I, I don't want to diminish or anything when I say this, um, because like you said, you, you're like, I'm a mom of a seven year old, but I want to identify otherwise, such as like with me, I'm like, I don't always want to identify as I'm Brooke and I'm an actor. Like say who, what you like to do, things like that. So your accomplishment as a mother, as a mom, that, that in and of itself, We may say is your biggest accomplishment in the PCOS realm, right? But, you know, we might also say another accomplishment. It's nowhere, like, it is, but it isn't weight loss. Like you and I talked about we lost substantial amounts of weight, having a disease, if you will, an illness, a syndrome, a syndrome, we'll call it like that, a syndrome where it's very, very difficult to lose weight. So that's a comp, an accomplishment in and of itself. And my whole shuck with weight loss is that we're not losing weight because society tells us. We're losing weight because it's kind of like for me at least. I think this is what happened for you, but I'll let you tell me. We'll be telling many tales. Um, and I'll be asking you many questions. Like it was the health aspect that precipitated and finally helped me lose weight as opposed to, I have to be skinny because I have to look like this because that. Worked like maybe for a day and then I would start something new because that's why it's a fad diet because it doesn't really sustain you. So I realized PCOS, I'm in it for the long haul. How do I get healthy? And losing weight was a byproduct, um, essentially. At the same time, I knew I needed to lose weight to make my symptoms less. So we are going to talk about an accomplishment that you have, which is a substantial amount of weight loss. I'll let you tell everybody how much, how, all that jazz. But I did not want to, you know, equate that with having a child because both are totally different types of

accomplishments. Let's talk about the weight loss. Cause that's what kind of who's that phat girl is about is about embracing your body, whatever shape or size or wherever you are health wise.

So. Tell us, what was that like initial spark for the weight loss? What were some of your quote unquote failed attempts? How did that all kind of begin?

SHAELE:

Yeah. So I, like a lot of women, um, grew up with a mom who did a lot of yo-yo dieting. My mom did Atkins, the blueprint diet, Weight Watchers, everything and anything that she possibly could. And that was my preview to how you lose weight. Yeah, it was. Follow this program and you restrict your eating and then in four months you give it up and try something else. Um, and I've, I've never been the skinny girl my entire life. Yep. Like my mom is half Japanese. I don't, I'm not blessed with height. I'm five foot one. Like there's not a lot of frame to have weight on without looking overweight, right? Right. Um, so when I was in college, I tried Weight Watchers. It didn't really help. Nothing helped. Like I mentioned, um, after I had my daughter, um, my ex husband and I divorced, uh, when she was two and a half and I also stopped nursing her at that same time. So my, I knew my hormones were like settling, but also not settling because I have PCOS. Um, and I spent about. Eight months, um, kind of just figuring out, like, what the hell I'm doing as a single mom.

BROOKE:

Right.

SHAELE:

We moved out, I had to get a job, like, complete differences in my life than what I was planning on and what I expected and what I was, like, mentally thinking was my life.

BROOKE:

Mm-hmm.

SHAELE:

Um, so, February of 2019. I started just looking into fasting. Um, I don't know like what prompted it. It might have honestly been a friend of mine who, uh, practices, uh, religious fasting and they were coming up on a religious fast. Um, and I was like, well, that's an interesting idea. Like, let's look into this. So I started looking into fasting and found that there is a huge freaking population of people That fast for weight loss. Yeah. And I was

like, well, shit, I can like skip breakfast. That's fine. Um, so I officially started my, uh, fasting journey on February 20th of 2019. Um, three days prior to that, I'd been in a car accident.

BROOKE:

Whoa.

SHAELE:

And totaled my Jeep.

BROOKE:

Oh. Love Jeeps. Sidebar, love Jeeps. But gosh, you totaled it.

SHAELE:

That was an intense accident. So Portland gets like really sporadic snow and ice in like February and March. And um. I was waiting for my boyfriend to finish playing a video game and I was like, well, I'm just going to go for a drive and go get gas and get coffee and wait for him to be done. And I was coming onto an on ramp and my back tire got stuck in some slush and ice and I fishtailed across the highway and hit a center barricade at like 40 miles an hour. And like, I worked for an insurance company at the time, and I got out and I was like, well, damn, this is totaled.

BROOKE:

Yeah, you knew already.

SHAELE:

Oh, God. Um, thankfully, like, no one was in the car but me. It was just like, the impact totaled the car. But it kind of made me pause and think about like, My health and like just my body and stuff because I went to the E. R. afterwards to get checked out. And like, I saw the number on the scale. I saw my blood pressure, like all of these vital signs, right? So, while I was home, recuperating from my car accident for those 3 days, I was like, well, I guess this is the time to start fasting. So, when I went back to work. That Monday, which I ended up quitting two days later, but, um, when I went back to work that Monday, um, I started with 16:8 fasting. So that's just skipping breakfast for most people.

BROOKE:

That's what I do, but I skip dinner. I think that's the one I do.

SHAELE:

Yeah, some people choose to skip dinner. Some people choose to skip breakfast. Um, one or the other is most common. No one seems to really skip lunch, right? Exactly. That'd be too hard, right? Yeah. Um, and I noticed that. Like I was losing weight. I was being more conscious of what I was eating at lunch and dinner, but it wasn't like I was eating, you know, pizza and tacos every day before, like I'm a pretty clean eater already. Right. Um, so it's not like I could really eat cleaner. Right. So I did that for probably like three months. Um, and then I changed jobs and when I was at this new job, um, I realized I was, I wasn't hungry at lunch. And it was the kind of job where like, you aren't forced to take a lunch if you don't want to. Which was nice because I, I didn't want to take a lunch. I didn't want to have to sit there for an hour and like do nothing waiting for my lunch to be over for an hour, right? Because I wasn't eating. So I started looking into like, well, can I do a longer fast? Like for my body? Am I going to like, Die of something. Right. And I found that a lot of people do OMAD or 23 one fasting, which is one meal a day. So you fast for 23 hours and then you have a one hour feeding window.

BROOKE:

Wow. Girl.

SHAELE:

Everyone I tell that to, I feel like I'm telling them, like, I'm a vampire and that's my life.

BROOKE:

You are from the area where they did "Twilight" [the movie].

SHAELE:

So yes, an hour north of here.

BROOKE:

But that's pretty intense. 23 one. I, you know, did you have anybody give you any flack? Like, Oh, that's not healthy. Like, was anybody giving you any negative. And you probably were like, I don't care. Or did, did you listen to any of that?

SHAELE:

Yeah. So I had some people that were like, well, you know, your body is going to die of lack of nutrients after so long. And I was like, actually, it's not like I did all the research on it. My bachelor's degree is in history and prior to that, I wanted to be a doctor, like research is what I like. So I didn't just like jump into OMAD and be like, yeah, this is what I'm doing. Like, exactly. I had so many research articles that I had read. I specifically then started looking into like OMAD and PCOS, right. I knew that part of PCOS is hormone and insulin dependent.

BROOKE:

Yes.

SHAELE:

And if you're changing when you're eating, you're changing when your body is getting insulin, and when you have insulin spikes, so it changes your hormone balance, like, it all starts to play together. Um, and I learned particularly that with OMAD fasting most people don't just like during their one hour feeding window. They aren't just like cool a steak. Let me just dive in. That's right. You're fast. So I like bone broth.

BROOKE:

Me too.

SHAELE:

I make homemade bone broth in my instapot every once when grocery prices are good every couple of days when they're like they are currently it's like once every 10 days. But I make bone broth and I break my fast with bone broth and then I move on to something like some nuts, pistachios, something small that starts to get your stomach acids going. And then you can eat like a full meal. The great thing, though, is that like most people, unless you're like a, you know, food eating champion, you're not going to eat so many calories in your one hour. That you're in a calorie, you know, overage, most people are still going to be in a calorie deficit then. Um, so you, you notice that you're starting to lose weight because your body physically cannot have that many calories in it to consume it at one time. It's not being constantly refed throughout the day. So your body can actually utilize fat. And yes, muscle, right? But mostly fat to feed you throughout the day for your energy. You're feeding off your own fat, if you will.

BROOKE:

Yeah.

SHAELE:

And you know, I've got plenty to go around.

BROOKE:

So Hey! But you know, my grandpa used to say this thing. He used to say, the less you eat, the less hungry you get. And I would be like, Whoa, Poppee, but I'm like starving sometimes. And you know, the fasting though, he, my Poppee, my grandpa was right. Your body and like going with the religious fasting. Sometimes I feel like I'm eating just to eat still to this day, I've lost a hundred pounds and I still feel like I'm eating just to eat. Whether it is that I'm working from home and I literally work in my kitchen or that. you know, I'm on a film set and there's crafty all around and I'm eating because the food is free and gourmet and delicious. And why, why not? Why not? But it's like when you're fasting, you are being, whether it's for religious or health reasons, you are being more conscious of your body. What you're doing. And sometimes when you're eating, I have to say to myself, Brooke, are you really hungry? Are you eating for another reason? So it makes you more mindful. So for people who are, you know, like have any negativity or hating on the fasting, or if people are like, well, medically, every body is different. Your body is different. Um, and my body, they're different. Even though we both have PCOS, everybody's body is literally different. And you found out and literally listened to your body. It took, you know, like for you, it was, um, you're, you're totaling your Jeep. And that was like your come to Jesus moment, if you will.

You know, everybody has different moments where we have to listen and then re listen to our bodies. My question is, how did you feel energetically? Were you like, tired? Were you able to exercise? Were you like, oh my God, like how am I going to get through?

SHAELE:

Yeah, so it's interesting because when you start fasting, you're constantly thinking about food. Yeah, like, okay, it's been eight hours since I last ate. When do I get to eat again? Yeah. But it's not like you aren't filling your body and your belly with things, you can have water, you can have black coffee, you can have tea, as long as you're not, there's two tech, like a technical side and then a not technical side, as long as you're not having more than 50 calories. That constitutes carbs or sugars in your fasting time that doesn't count as breaking your fast if you go over 50 calories or it's carbs or sugar, your body and stomach acid starts to produce certain back, not batteries, but like chemicals to break food down. And that's what we're trying to get out of during the fasting time is that you need your belly to stop producing those so that utilizes fat instead of what you're putting into your stomach for nutrition. So I, I drink so much water throughout the day when I'm fasting and everyone, if you're, if you're exercising, what are you reaching for? Usually water,

right? Unless you're like a super powered athlete and you have like your sports drinks or whatever. But for me, I can't do that sugary intake of drinks.

BROOKE:

Right.

SHAELE:

So I'm not going to reach for a Gatorade. I'm going to reach for water. That's what it is for me. Yeah. Um, so, you know, people think they're going to be hungry all the time, and then you forget how long it's been since you ate. You're like, oh, huh, I guess I hadn't realized it had already been 12 hours. Wow. Like, you know, like, okay, I wasn't hungry because you're still feeding your body with fluid. Right. You're still going pee. Like, and I'm just going to say, I drink black coffee every single morning and it is very satisfying being cleared out in the mornings. Yeah.

BROOKE:

Word. Yeah. I'm debating a colonic for these purposes.

SHAELE:

So yeah. It's pretty much a daily colonic that you get, and you know, no complaints there. I also will say that here in Oregon, cannabis is legal, so I do use cannabis to help if I'm really dragging, like, I'll use that to help give me more energy or if I'm struggling to sleep because I'm like, I really want more ice cream or some, some more desserts or like that damn Chex mix that's on my bedside, that's what I want.

BROOKE:

Wait, it doesn't give you the munchies?

SHAELE:

No, but I've used cannabis for years and like, it's part of my daily regimen of how I manage my PCOS. I don't use--

BROOKE:

Whoa, this is fascinating.

SHAELE:

So I don't, I'm not on any like mental health medications.

BROOKE:

Amen.

SHAELE:

I exclusively use cannabis for my management of mental health shit.

BROOKE:

And I highly condone that. Jersey recently legalized it. So, hell yeah! I just use CBD oil because I'm afraid I used to, um, I mean, I'm, I, you're, you're being very polite in the way you say it. So do cannabis. I was just going to say smoke pot, but because like the smoking itself, I stopped smoking cigarettes. The smoking of the pot, the smoking of the pot, it would, kind of like I, I didn't like the sensation of it. Like. Physically, but Oh God, I loved it, but I would eat like a beast. And when people ask me how I originally lost weight, one of the things was that I stopped it, but then again, we're talking 20 years ago. A lot has changed and maybe I have crazy ass Long Island strains cause you know.

SHAELE:

Yeah, so my partner uses, um, cannabis medically, um, for a kidney condition that he has. So my introduction to cannabis was through him as a medical patient, not as a recreational stoner who doesn't care about things.

So he got me into like looking at the specific strains. What am I, what strains am I using? for specific ailments. What terpenes are in these strains that yield specific things. So it was a very like medicinal and research based approach to it. So we grow certain strains in our backyard so that I have the specific strains that I use for my PCOS year round.

BROOKE:

Nice. I wish we were neighbors, man. Or like shipping it was legal. Right? Whoa.

SHAELE:

Yeah, so it's, it's part of my entire life. And like, I'm thankful that my partner is extremely supportive of PCOS because Yeah, yeah. It's, you know, being on metformin is great if

that's what works for you, but it didn't work for me and it, there is no medication that is specifically for PCOS help with the struggles. It's everything's just white labeled for it of, of this, of this, of this. And like, I don't want to be on a whole regimen of medications to help symptoms that I could use cannabis for instead, like it's true because they're just throwing different medication at you, which give you different symptoms.

BROOKE:

You know, uh, Metformin gave me the runs. I'm just going to say: it gave me the runs. Birth control made me faint in the middle of the street in Brooklyn once. Spironolactone made me have to pee and urinate all the time. If I was still on it, I'm sure like the kidney stone and pelvic floor issues I've had would be even worse. I'm not saying spironolactone gives you kidney stones, but I believe, um, it eventually does affect your kidneys. Spironolactone is usually what they give for like, um, any medication is going to eventually affect your eventually exactly because it's filtering out through the kidneys, you know? So, and my dad is diabetic, uh, and he has Stage four kidney disease and he's on a shit ton of meds. Yeah. And I, I hate it because the doctors, I especially think back home and because I'm not there with him to fight them or to fight him. But, it's not all on me. I feel like if he would've like, been a lot more careful about what he eats for his diabetes and maybe gotten on some medical marijuana a long time ago, he wouldn't have as many issues. All these medicines they throw at you. And like you were saying for PCOS, it's just a symptom masker. Any medicine they will give you is a symptom masker. And I know I'm preaching to the choir, you and I both know, but I want our listeners to understand this, how it's like, okay, we're not really going to treat what's going on. If you really want to treat what's going on, you have to, I hate to say it, but kind of do it yourself or seek out fellow people like us, um, sisters, if you will, um, with the sisters, with the CY. Or find other methods such as acupuncture to really get to the root cause, like what Shaele did with the intermittent fasting, what I did with like the fasting in a sense, and also the lifestyle and food changes. That's getting to the root, not covering up the symptoms with medication. How would we be living when we're 60 or 70 years old? I don't know. So I love that. Like, it's so funny that like Facebook connected us and that we're not just PCOS people, but we're very much like, au naturel, like screw this because medicine kind of screwed us over in a sense, like not, not completely, you know, we're not dissing it completely into each zone, but.

I love that you found what works for you and tell us because I always say it's not about the number, but people still do like the numbers because that's kind of my hook that I lost a hundred pounds. Whoop dee do, but people, you know, like people do get lured in or want to learn more about how the hell we did it. How much did you lose? How have you still been doing the intermittent fasting? How long did it take? All that kind of technical stuff that people just love to hear.

SHAELE:

Yes. So, um, I mentioned I started fasting February of 2019. Um, I jumped into the 23:1 OMAD fasting by April of 2019. And I fasted doing that until, or in 2023, until pretty much January of 2023.

BROOKE:

Whoa! So for almost four years?

SHAELE:

Yeah, so like I fasted like significantly for a while. And then, you know, life things happened and in January - it's not that I needed to like set it aside. I just couldn't think about it at the moment and put it aside for fasting. It just like ate whatever I wanted, whenever I wanted. I listened to my body really is what it was. I wasn't getting a lot of sleep at the time for things going on in life and no amount of coffee was helping. So at that point, like you got to feed yourself, and I did notice over the last, like, you know, 9, 10 months, like, I've put on some of the weight that I did lose, so I am back to fasting right now, because I did find a lot more mental clarity when I was fasting.

BROOKE:

Yes, that's what I was going to ask you about that we had talked about previously, that it brought about mental clarity. Talk about that because that's something I was recently talking about with my acupuncturist where sometimes it's like, if I feel like a little, Oh, weirder, I've been having vertigo with dizziness. Let me go reach for some nuts. And you don't always have to reach for the food. You have to listen to your body first. So talk about that mental clarity. I'm so intrigued.

SHAELE:

Yeah. So I just find that like, As someone who has a ADHA Ha. I have a, I have a lot of like pinging going on in my brain constantly.

BROOKE:

Yep.

SHAELE: And when I'm feeding the pings that are like, we're hungry. There's snacks in the cupboard. You just made apple pie cinnamon rolls. And they're sitting on the counter right now, like, which I, I did, I made those this morning. . No, but like if I give in to all of those pings. I would just be eating all the time.

BROOKE:

Yeah.

SHAELE:

All the other pings are like, "hey, let's work for our clients. Let's get things done. And like, if I focus on that, everything's better. I'm not focusing on eating then. So, that's like the biggest mental clarity part for me. So, between fasting for, you know, three and a half, almost four years to stopping fasting and back to fasting, um, total overall, I've lost about 65 pounds.

BROOKE:

Wow. That's wonderful.

SHAELE:

Yeah. Um, you know, I, I didn't do any sort of like exercise stuff. Um, in the midst of COVID, we got a dog. So I walk him, more than I did before having a dog.

BROOKE:

Tell us what kind of dog really quick. Cause we're all dog people.

SHAELE:

He's a, he's a red and white Siberian Husky.

BROOKE:

Oh yes. That's right.

SHAELE:

Yeah. Yeah. His name is Straw Beary. My seven year old named him. Yeah, he's the goodest of boys. He argues with me about the same as my seven year old does. Yeah. But he will make you, that's a very active breed.

BROOKE:

Yeah.

SHAELE:

So he'll make you like walk or like. Yeah, so thankfully like the neighborhood we live in, we don't have any sidewalks. In the neighborhood, cause we're like tucked away, but when it's nice weather, he and I can go for like a three to five mile walk every day.

BROOKE:

Whoa.

SHAELE:

Yeah. And like, we're powering through, like, I've got my serial killer podcast in like, you know, we're all doing good. We usually stop. If we're doing that, we'll stop at a coffee shop and get him like a little pup cup.

BROOKE:

Yeah.

SHAELE: For being a good boy and be on our merry way. But yeah, he, he definitely keeps me active. My seven year old keeps me very active. But it's not like, I go to the gym and work out for 30 minutes on cardio and then lift weights and then go do this. Like I must do this. Yeah, it's like I rake my giant yard of leaves and I mow the giant yard and do gardening and like other things that are gonna build muscle and use my body the way it needs to be without focusing on like a number I'm lifting at the gym or miles ran or anything like that.

BROOKE:

Right. And, you know, I've been doing a lot of research on the exercise component for PCOS too. And going along with what you've said, you're so right. Moving how your body, how our ancestors moved, how we are or were or were designed to are designed to move because I joined a gym and I literally have not lost weight and I didn't really do it to lose weight. I did it to like to exercise and have fun, but I was always a big home exerciser or doing thing. I mainly joined it for the pool, but it's like I see so many people and I get anxiety when I go there because the people are doing their, their reps and I mean this is Jersey so people have fake eyelashes and a full face of makeup on it, which is like, That really?

SHAELE:

Yeah.

BROOKE:

Whoa. I was wondering if it was just a jersey thing. Okay.

SHAELE:

No, that's here too. And then I like show up with like, you know, no makeup and honestly probably reeking of weed. And my T shirt, like, I mean, I wear like a T, you know, I don't have any fancy athletic gear, right? Yeah. I don't, I don't have like my Stanley cup and like my fresh Nikes.

No, I'm like rocking old torn up shoes. Like yeah. Probably going to stay on there looking at the machines of like, huh? How do we do this one again?

BROOKE:

Yeah, for real. Like, Oh, and it's like, you know, it does get boring in a sense. Especially like the weightlifting is so daunting and I think that's how, like I messed up, um, my vertigo. With PCOS they say don't overdo exercise. Yes, you need to exercise, but the kind of exercise you're getting in is, is, is wonderful. You don't want to overdo it. I do Zumba just like once a week or twice a week. I was doing it four or five times a week. That's actually. Too much cardio.

SHAELE:

That's a lot. That's a lot of zumbaing.

BROOKE:

Too much, man, because it can rev up your cortisol and we have to keep our cortisol not so revved up. So yes, um, I'm not saying Brooke and Shaele are saying, don't do exercise. No, we're saying move how your body needs to, especially our PCOS sisters. You don't want to break yourself, exercise or over exercise. There is that fine line. So like lunges are better than like running and doing like, you know, a million high knees. For example, building and that's what you're doing, um, with Straw Bear-y, your dog. So I, I am still intrigued by this fasting for 23 hours, eating for one hour, the 23 :1 OMAD, one meal a day, mind blown, but I'm really glad that you found what works for you.

And, you've said you lost about 65 pounds, but it's brought about mental clarity. And has it helped with any other of the PCOS symptoms like for me, for example, I noticed when I lost weight, it's still not perfect that the hair, the facial hair growth, but it did get 75 percent better. That's one example.

SHAELE:

I struggled a lot with, um, acne. It wasn't just like, well, my skin looks beautiful right now, but when I am not fasting, I break out so much more. Um, I'm constantly breaking out and really like deep, painful. Cystic, right?

BROOKE:

Yeah.

SHAELE:

When I'm fasting, I find that my skin is so much clearer. Like overall my health is better. My hair is better, like. It's amazing how much, like, when I'm eating, 24 hours a day essentially, right? When I eat whenever I want, I find that my body doesn't have bowel movements as regularly, and when I do they're not as, like, the way they're supposed to be.

BROOKE:

Right. I know exactly what you mean

SHAELE:

I get more backed up. But then when I'm fasting, it's like very regular, very predictable. Like I'm going to wake up in the morning. I'm going to have my coffee 15 minutes later, we're going to go to the bathroom. We're all cleared out. We're good to go for the day. It's your, your regimen. It's responding to the regimen.

BROOKE:

Yes.

SHAELE:

And you know, of course there's days where I'm like, shit, I'm so hungry and I will break my fast early. Right. But that's listening to my body. There's also other days where I'm like, I'm not hungry at dinnertime. I'm going to have a really light dinner because I know that tomorrow I have whatever to do with Lauren and I am not going to be home at my normal feeding time.

BROOKE:

Right.

SHAELE:

And I think that's one of the biggest things with fasting to this degree is that you learn very quickly. Am I hungry or am I bored? Bored. Am I thirsty or am I bored?

BROOKE:

Right.

SHAELE:

And then you start to notice like what foods make you feel good. I don't know if you struggle with eating fruit, but for me, I cannot eat fruit. Um, it sucks, because I would live off of fruit if I could. But that spike in insulin from fructose leads me straight to the bathroom. When I fast, I then have my, my nice big meal at dinner time. I can have small amounts of fruit after I've had that meal because my body isn't trying to eat so much fructose with nothing in front of it. So, you know, there's small things that are blessings in disguise with fasting for me because I can enjoy small things of fruit that I couldn't before.

BROOKE:

Right.

SHAELE:

You know, what I put into my body, I pay a lot more attention to if certain meats do better than others. Like I make note of that and I adjust accordingly, right?

BROOKE:

So I'm fascinated by this and it's actually inspiring me, even though I kind of do my own little like, Oh, what did we say? I'm on like the 16:8 fasting. I think I might shake things up even more by. Maybe, well, it's 4:28 my time, so I, I probably will finish eating by five, but honestly being even more mindful with what I'm eating and starting even maybe later, because sometimes it's like, I'm, I'm with the actors strike, I'm not waking up at like four in the morning. I'm waking up at 6:30, but I can keep going, you know? So it's like, you don't always need to eat breakfast right away. Listen to when you get hungry and I'm not saying some people are like, Oh, breakfast is the most important meal of the day for some people. It is not for everyone. Everybody is different. And that's what you've learned because you work your fast around. Is it like six, seven o'clock? So you eat dinner?

SHAELE:

It depends on what activities we have going on in the afternoons. Okay. Usually it's somewhere between like 4:30 and 5:30 since I start making dinner around five. I'm very much someone that wants to taste test the dinner that I'm feeding my child. So, you know, I'll, I'll break my fast as I'm making dinner. That way, as we sit down to dinner, I am at a point where I can eat that entire meal without any worries. Oh, there's an app that I use called zero.

BROOKE:

Okay.

SHAELE: Z E R O. And it, uh, allows you to like track your fast. So you can like click start fast and then you can do preset fasting like 16 : 8 or 24 : 2 or 23 : 1 , whatever you want. And it gives you like little helpful tidbits of information throughout the time. So once you've reached a certain amount of hours into your fast, it'll say like, you're now in this stage of fasting and like, this is what your body is doing. And like, it's fascinating to learn 'cause then you start to learn like, okay, what I'm feeling is actually this happening. It's my body releasing this enzyme that's Doing X, Y and Z as opposed to I'm hungry and that's a hunger pain.

BROOKE:

So, that's pretty freaking cool.

SHAELE:

Yeah, it's nice and it gives you like little green check marks when you've completed your fast and like badges, so if you like little hits of dopamine as a neurodiverse person, it's great for it. Yeah, little badge.

BROOKE:

Yeah, that's cool. I'm gonna have to check this out, especially since I already fast and I've just been doing it just as myself alone, so this is great.

SHAELE:

Yeah. Fun to check out.

BROOKE:

Shaele, we're going to wrap up our episode, but we have what I'm calling lately the rapid fire phatness. That's phat with a P H just some random questions that I love asking everyone because it's basically what my, the, the, the who's that fat girl podcast is about and what inspires me. So do you have a favorite childhood memory associated with food?

SHAELE:

I have many as we know, but what's one of yours? Um, so my mom's, uh, my mom was adopted, so her adoptive family is here in the U. S., and that's who I called my grandparents, and my adoptive grandma's from Hawaii, so we spent a lot of time in Hawaii eating Hawaiian food, and one of my favorite memories, probably, is coming out when I was, I don't know, like eight or nine, to a tray Like this tall stacked of sushi. And at the time, I did not appreciate sushi the way I do now. And I didn't eat a single piece of it. I just ate like California rolls, essentially.

BROOKE:

Yeah, yeah.

SHAELE:

And like, you know, other things that didn't have fish in it. So just that, that image of like a tower of sushi is It's probably a favorite food memory for me.

BROOKE:

Oh, I love that. And I have not even though I've only interviewed people who I know like personally so far, we have not had that. So I love that. And that's funny because that was my boyfriend and his first date. We ate sushi. And I just. Nice. Kind of realized that. I love that. But I, I'm glad that you now like sushi because it's so fun. Oh, that, that's fascinating. Well, my thing was knocked. My, my iPad thought that was fascinating too. I love that now. We know, and I think you and I told some tales about this too, maybe a little bit when we talked on the phone. But like the whole idea of a guilty pleasure, I don't really like that because we shouldn't shame or guilt ourselves around food. Like, let's get away from that conversation, but let's use that term just for shits and giggles. Do you have a favorite quote unquote guilty pleasure food?

SHAELE:

Chex mix.

BROOKE:

Chex mix! So, salty or like, do you do the muddy, muddy buddy?

SHAELE:

No, no, no, no. I want like, Okay, they make Chex mix powder that you can get to make your own Chex mix.

BROOKE:

Okay.

SHAELE:

The best thing is to get a Chex mix bowl. package and then take the Chex Mix powder and put it onto the Chex Mix Bold to make it Chex Mix Extra Extra Bold. Oh my gosh. That's what I like.

BROOKE:

You like the crunch. You like the crunch. Yeah, like my boyfriend Harry loves like he, it's called Cajun Snack Mix. A lot of random places. Big Lots has it. He loves that. So y'all are, y'all are crunchy salty people. Oh, now on the flip side, do you have a favorite healthy food?

SHAELE:

Oh, favorite healthy food that you cook a lot that is like, well, bone broth is one of them, but like, yeah, you really love. Aside from bone broth, I would probably say, and I say this is a healthy food, but scrambled eggs.

BROOKE:

Yeah, it is healthy.

SHAELE:

I, they're like a poor people food, but I would eat them for breakfast, lunch, dinner. If I ate breakfast and lunch, um, I would eat them every day. I love eggs. Scrambled is great. What my daughter calls is oaky eggs. So sunny side up eggs. Sunny side oats. Sunny side oats. She can't say yolk.

BROOKE:

Oh, yolk.

SHAELE:

So she calls it oaky.

BROOKE:

That's cute.

SHAELE:

But yeah, I know eggs are my favorite non junk food - food.

BROOKE:

That's funny that, you know, it took me forever. My friend, Jen had to get me into eating eggs. She, she was like one day she was staying over at my house and, um, Jen listens to the podcast. So we'll give her a shout out. But she was like, girl, Missy, you're going to have to learn how to like eggs. You know, we're on a, like a, you know, we're on a tight budget and it's a good way to get your vegetables in. We'll just add a shit ton of vegetables and you'll eat eggs. And I started eating omelets. So, um, eggs are great because vitamins. Protein. And you're right. Aside from like that crazy price and egg spike, when remember the eggs like got very pricey, I think, was that about a year ago? Knock on wood, like they're one of the more affordable sources of protein. And, you know, I don't, does Straw Bear-y like eggs? Like we cook eggs sometimes and put little bits in for Annie and Archer.

SHAELE:

Yeah, he, he likes everything that humans like besides fruits and vegetables.

BROOKE:

Hey, represent. Straw Bear-y. And two more questions : Do you have like a healthy lifestyle mantra or something that you tell yourself or you that tries to bring you back to like grounding when things feel weird? One is kind of just like, listen to your body.

SHAELE:

Yeah. Um, and from there, it's also like, yeah, there's going to be days where you eat like shit. And then there's going to be days where you, you eat really, really healthy and I try

to look at my, my health and lifestyle from a big picture standpoint, as opposed to like, this specific day. Right?

BROOKE:

That's really good, Shaele.

SHAELE:

Because you can't see the progress. Every single day you see the progress when you step back and you're like, huh? So like Facebook has been great because Facebook memories pop up with all of these pictures from before I lost weight when I was in college and when I got married and all of these times where I know how I felt inside and I know how I felt on the outside. And now I see myself of how I, I know how I feel on the inside and how I feel on the outside. And it's night and day because I've listened to my body over the last couple of years to do what's best for it.

BROOKE:

Nice.

SHAELE:

And that's a really long mantra.

BROOKE:

No, that's a good mantra because it also helps me sometimes because lately in the past couple weeks I've been doing this thing where I'm beating myself up and it's like, Brooke, chill out. You had two granola bars instead of one today. Like relax. And so that, that's, it's true. You have to like take it easy. It is day by day, but it's also not day by day. It's like that happy medium of like, step back, look at the big picture. It's big picture. Not every day is going to be perfect.

SHAELE:

Like, and like some days your body is going to consume more calories naturally because you are within days of your period, right? Exactly. We're human. You're gonna be hungrier and you're like, well, why am I hungrier? Because your body is doing more work. Right. Your body needs it. Your body's fixing the water, your body's ovulating and it's dropping that egg down, which is like gross way to put it. But yeah.

BROOKE:

Listening to your body is really, really helpful. Yeah. And listening to your body instead of listening to all the noise. And I'm glad we're, as a society, I, I feel and hope we're going more that way, at least, as opposed to where we were like 10, 20, 30 years ago, you know? Yeah. Shaele, we're going to end it with one of my, I say one of my favorite questions. I guess it's a very loaded question, but it's, it's, uh, we're going to throw that word fat, pretty hot and tempting in here. Was there one time or moment or a series of moments that you remember where you really found like you found your inner phat girl - pretty hot and tempting and that can be on any shape or form. Didn't have doesn't have to be with red lipstick and a black dress, you know?

SHAELE:

Yeah. So it's funny you ask that because, um, most people that know me, um, at some point in our friendship have commented on the size of my booty. And it's always been a very self conscious thing for me, because when you go jean shopping, they don't fit the way they're supposed to, and then dresses ride up more, there's so many problems with it. When I was in college, one of the first times that I ever wore black leggings. My best friend and I, um, at the time were walking across the quad to go to the gym. Okay, we're like, we're gonna go to the gym and start working out and go to sauna afterwards. We're walking across, and it's like 10pm at night, so like dark. And from across the quad, we hear, Damn, look at that ass! And she turns to me and goes, they're not talking about me because I don't have a booty, they're talking about you. And in the moment I was so like mortified, right, because I'd never had that happen to that extent. And I realized like, yes, that's very much being catcalled. Hundred percent.

BROOKE:

Right.

SHAELE:

But looking back on it throughout the years, that's always been my pivotal of like, at least I've got a nice ass that someone's willing to call across the quad at night to let me know. So that's probably like, you know. My phat girl moment there is having a nice booty that someone called out.

BROOKE:

Heck yeah. That's a great phat girl moment. Represent. You know, I love it. Shaele. I know you have to go pick up your daughter. Lauren's her name?

SHAELE:

Yes.

BROOKE:

Lauren from school. So we are wrapping this like I must. say, I don't want like, well, hormones, speaking of hormones, I like, don't, I'm, I am legit almost fixing to cry because it's just really funny how the universe and Facebook, yes. And artificial intelligence maybe, but definitely the universe connected us. We're now newfound friends, new founder, new friends I love this connection. I'm so grateful that you had the cojones to email me and contact me and say, I'm gonna go out on a limb and reach out to Brooke. And I'm like, whoa, wait, I'm, I'm the one who should be honored. Like, this is awesome. I, I think we both have a similar mission, which is to help other people who are growing through PCOS or body image issues, whatever anyone's going through. I think we share a mission to just talk about it, make people feel better and to maybe share some laughs and smiles and love. So I'm so grateful we met and thank you so much. We're going to end the podcast here, but we'll stay on for just another minute for me to tell you how awesome you were.

SHAELE:

Thank you for having me, Brooke.

BROOKE:

Of course, you're welcome.

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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