

Ep #155: Intuitive Eating with Evelyn Tribole



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Tobi Fairley

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You are listening to the *Design You* podcast with Tobi Fairley, episode number 155.

Welcome to the *Design You* podcast. A show where interior designers and creatives learn to say no to busy and say yes to more health, wealth and joy. Here's your host, Tobi Fairley.

Hey friends. I am so excited to be with you today. I'm so excited to be with our guest today. It was such a personal privilege because my guest today is Evelyn Tribole. And Evelyn is the co-creator of The Intuitive Eating Movement. She's a registered dietician. She has a practice in Newport Beach, California. She is an incredibly smart woman who was the co-creator of the original Intuitive Eating concept which is if you don't know it, a revolutionary anti-diet approach to life.

And so it just so happens that when Evelyn's PR agent reached out to us, it's an agent we work with a lot. She reached out and was like, "Hey, would you like to have Evelyn on your show?" I'm like, "How did you know", which of course she didn't that I have been reading her book for several months now.

I'm practicing intuitive eating and her principles of intuitive eating and doing a lot of deep work, not only on my thoughts and all of the ways I have been indoctrinated like so many of you have with the diet culture, diet mentality. All of these things that are very patriarchal that have a major social justice and racial justice implication. And it's like all these parts of my life came together last year. So being sick of dieting, working on antiracism and social justice, all of this came together.

Also studying how I for years really denied myself pleasure and I think a lot of you have probably done that for years too. And it all came together, just divine timing that I was reading Evelyn's book at the same time I was doing all of this other work, and antiracism. And they're very connected. And we talk about this in the interview. You'll read about it in the book, probably both of her books, her original one that we'll talk about. And the brand new one that's out this week as you're listening to this episode.

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But there's just so much that is so timely right now about how we think of ourselves, our bodies, food and all the things that we spend a lot of time thinking about way more than I would like to be thinking about. And I'm remedying that. So if you want to know about intuitive eating, if you want to give up dieting forever, if you want to make peace with your food, if you want to learn to respect your body, all bodies of all sizes and find more joy than you can possibly imagine in your life then this is your episode.

So get out your pen and paper and get ready to enjoy this remarkable interview with Evelyn Tribole.

Tobi: Hey Evelyn, welcome to the Design You podcast. It feels like divine intervention that you're here.

Evelyn: I'm so thrilled to be here.

Tobi: So happy you are. Okay, so we're going to get into why I say that in a minute. But in case people don't know you yet, haven't read your remarkable – I guess, was it your first book or you may have several books. You have several.

Evelyn: I've got several but it's the one I'm the most known for.

Tobi: Okay, the one you're most known for, Intuitive Eating. And then you have a new one coming out which we're going to talk about. But in case they don't know all about you, why don't you just give everybody an idea of who you are, what you do, your work in the world, which is just transformational? And then we're going to dig in.

Evelyn: Wow. I'm going to try and give you the short version. So I'm the co-author, co-creator of Intuitive Eating with Elyse Resch. And we created that framework over 25 years ago because of our frustration working with clients, were putting them on all these 'sensible' diet meal plans and it wasn't working. And it's like oh my God, there is something wrong with this

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system. And so we did a really deep dive into the research, considered our experiences, other things and came up with this model.

And fast forward 25 years later, there's over 140 studies on our work showing validity. And so between the validity happening and the research, it's taken off on social media. It's just, you know, and then the media, media. And I think it's a reflection of people are tired of the suffering. They're tired of the body denigration. They're tired of worrying about every nano. And they're like, "I don't think your grandparents counted macros."

Tobi: Exactly. I think that all the time, I think that all the time. Yes, and so amazing. So my first question, kind of I want to be like where have you been all my life? But you've been right here for 25 years, you were under my nose and I didn't know it, but I am – I just turned 49 a week or two ago.

Evelyn: Happy birthday.

Tobi: I think my first diet was probably at 10. Thank you. I think my first diet was probably at either 10 or 12. I mean I'm like the walking text, you know, I'm the walking poster child for your book. And there's just so much about it that I can relate to. And I know that me and every other woman on the planet pretty much feel that same way. And I have the loving but patriarchal father, the mother who was never thin enough and always on a diet, all that, that story that we all know so well, weight was worthiness.

And then when I was failing at that, work became worthiness. And it's just, it's so typical but it is so, like you said, so exhausting. And so last year I had this, what would you call it? Coming together of awareness around my privilege and starting some deep antiracism work.

Evelyn: Awesome.

Tobi: And which of course then immediately almost moved into the fat phobia kind of narrative, so all of that. And at the same time hitting a point where I was so sick of dieting and I was working with a coach who was like, "Have you ever read Intuitive Eating?" And I'm like, "I've heard about that for years, but no." And so all of this came together at just the perfect time

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for it to make so much sense to me and my buy-in was even at a deeper level when I started to understand the social justice implications of all of this.

And your latest version of your Intuitive Eating book, not even the new book, I think does such a beautiful job of – it was speaking to a lot of other books I was reading like Sonya Renee Taylor's book.

Evelyn: I love her.

Tobi: And Fearing the Black Body and all of those books. And there's so much there. So there's a lot I want to get into today, but when people are like, "Whoa, back up." I think it would make sense for us to start if you think, with you just kind of introducing your work and the principles of intuitive eating and people to even start knowing what we're talking about here or even diet mentality if you want to start there. Either of those things I think is where this conversation probably should start.

Evelyn: Yeah, so we're on the same playing field, because one of the side-effects of it taking off is a lot of people have misunderstandings as to what intuitive eating. Let me just start with there. So intuitive eating is an evidence based self-care framework in which you are the expert of your body. There's over 140 studies on our work, there are 10 principles, they are not rigid rules. You can't cherry pick one principle and say that's what intuitive eating is. It's an inner dynamic. It's a dynamic interplay of instinct, thought and emotion.

And if you think about how often, especially as people who identify as women or female, how often are we taught to connect with our bodies? Yeah, right. And so this, I can't tell you the amount of people I've worked with in tears will say, "I can tell you the macro in a single pea, but I don't know how to effing", I don't think it goes like that, "But I don't know how to effing eat. I don't know how to fucking eat anymore. And I'm successful in this, in this and this but not this."

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And so I asked, “But how often have you really listened to your body?” What if we listen to our bodies the way we listen to our cell phones, every little text message that’s coming along. We’re on it. And so part of it is shifting our awareness, it’s shifting our focus to what’s within. And that this wisdom actually resides inside, but diet culture which has been here so long. You mentioned Sabrina Strings book, *Fearing the Black Body* which is really should be required reading in any health profession, how fat phobia’s really in racism and patriarchy.

And so what I do to make this meaningful, because we could get really intellectual. But I think when people are listening to podcasts they also want like, well, so what do I do in my life. Just think about your origin of your own family, as you started to describe yours. What’s your body story? What’s your body lineage? How are bodies talked about in your family, not just your parents, but siblings, aunts, uncles, grandparents, was there body gossip? And then – and this is more of a topic in the new book is what if you could stop the legacy of diet culture in your family?

The idea of this manlike culture is huge, but in your own family, in your own roof, that’s actually really – that’s actionable. We can set this up as a value. How do we do? It’s all very doable. And we teach other people how we want to be treated and what we want to listen to by letting them know. I’m not okay telling jokes about bodies, it hurts people, yeah.

Tobi: Totally. And that was my upbringing. I mean even fat jokes and my parents when I watched their marriage and their relationship. My dad I now would probably say is more naturally thin, although he has always worked out with weights and been conscious. But he also then would eat whatever he wanted and still wear a size 32 pants. And then so I had this story that the minute my family are disciplined and thin, and the women are not thin. We’re heavy and we have big thighs. And we’re not as disciplined. And we eat our feelings.

And this was, it felt like the truth my whole life. And that was the story that I grew up. And so you’re so right. And the piece that I think was the first to go for me is what you’re talking about with diet mentality is I was taught at a

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very young age to not trust myself and to tune out my own hunger or what I was feeling and deny it. And look outside to all of these gurus, or bodybuilders, or whoever my dad was studying, because he was working out. Or once my mom lost 70 pounds doing Jane Fonda workouts and was so proud of herself. And she did look beautiful.

But even in the book you talk about – I love this question, you say, “If you celebrate other people’s weight loss, you’re perpetuating this diet mentality and this” – what do you call it? It was another piece of it but one of your...

Evelyn: Well, you’re perpetuating body hierarchy, and moving away from that actually body diversity is a thing. And the person that’s on the receiving end of the compliment, they’re also in this place of oh my God, what did they think about me before? Or someone did some kind of weight loss diet and the research on that is – there’s a ton of research that shows it not only doesn’t work, causes harm. But also is one of the most predictive things on getting back more weight.

I think the other thing is when did this become okay for public discourse? Because the other thing is when you compliment somebody, you might be complimenting on the fact this person just lost their baby, they miscarried. And they don’t want to tell you about it, they’re not ready, or maybe not ever ready to tell a stranger or someone that they work with, or a colleague. They might have cancer. They might have some other type of thing going on. You don’t know what you’re complimenting. In fact something I’ve been a witness to a lot sadly so.

I specialize in eating disorders and I can’t tell you the amount of people I’ve worked with that are complimented on their body that is currently being harmed through abusive practices in an eating disorder. So these are things that we can start to do. And hey, I’m all for compliments, but let’s talk about things that are in your capacity. Oh my God, I love the way you smile. You’re such a bright light. I feel so seen and heard every time I’m with you.

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And so we need to start at looking at other ways and moving away from appearance in terms of compliments because it reinforces things also to our children. We learn to objectify ourselves, which becomes problematic and we become inauthentic in this process.

Tobi: Yeah, that's so important. And I think that even under the umbrella of patriarchy, that really struck me in the book, you said, "If appearance is the thing we're focused on then we're objectifying our body and we're undermining our self-worth." And I write all in my books and scribble on the pages.

Evelyn: So do I. Kindred spirits.

Tobi: And I write big lines all over. And that one just really stuck out to me because not just other people, I mean even we go into the Me Too Movement or all of that, where other people are objectifying us. But we're doing it to ourselves. You say personal gaslighting I think. But we are objectifying ourselves all the time in the process, right?

Evelyn: Yeah. And so what this is, this is about coming home to your personal home, your body. It's the house of your values, your humanity, your characteristics. And that is so profound. If we could start connecting on that level, that all bodies regardless of size, race, gender, all kinds of things. We're all worthy of dignity and respect. We start with that.

Tobi: It's so good. And as I've done this work, so I started reading the book back in probably September. So I've got probably close to six months now of doing this work. And I would say I'm still just in the part of start trusting myself to eat all the things that have been on the restricted list for years. And I don't know what phase of the continuum I'm technically on. But I've made a lot of progress in the way I think about things, the way I see things. So I definitely notice now a lot, when we do things like compliment people's weight loss or just the terms.

My mom and I will be looking, I'll be like, "What do you think about this dress for me or my 15 year old daughter for this event", or whatever? And

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our natural words are things like, “It’s so slimming.” And now I notice that. And I feel my skin crawl because that’s so interesting, there’s so much of this just that we’ve been indoctrinated into that we don’t even notice these belief systems and they’re everywhere, right?

Evelyn: But the funny thing is once you start noticing you can’t un-see it, like in the matrix, once you take that pill you can’t un-see it. But we can start working with it and you can start noticing oh my gosh. And one of the things that really gets me that people say over and over again, how life changing this is. And I think in part because it frees up your brain space. You’re no longer spending all this time consumed with worry about every nano piece of food you’re putting into your body. So you’re present with your kids, you’re present in your relationships and they’re flourishing.

I’ve had artists contact me and say their art came back, their creativity died in this process. And so that’s – I think what happens with diet culture, it’s so loud especially on social media. And people get into this self-absorption about this latest greatest diet. But you never hear about the impact down the road, loss of control eating, constant worry, depression, all these things that we see also coming out in the research.

And so when you are coming at it from your own experience and you’re connecting to your body and your life, and you begin to flourish, after a while those other messages that you’re hearing become irrelevant. They don’t impact you anymore. That’ll happen in time.

Tobi: Yeah. I see it already. I see it when I see other people going, “I’m doing IF now”, or I’m doing whatever the latest trend is. And I feel like I have on the Teflon coating now. You can’t touch me. It feels like, oh, okay, well, I’m not going to get in their business and try to teach them. I’m just going to sit back and watch and hope that they come to the same place because it’s so freeing.

Evelyn: It’s so freeing. And you have to be ready. And I’m a strong advocate, there’s no place for shame in intuitive eating. And you can’t shame people into change. And so what happens over time is there tends

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to be a shifting toward compassion, like oh my God. I remember when I was stuck in diet culture, and I couldn't stop talking about. So that's eventually what can end up happening. And yet at the same time you want people to know this. That's why I'm speaking out on this stuff everywhere I can.

Tobi: I'm so glad.

Evelyn: I honor our humanity first and then look at what can we do to make a difference in this world.

Tobi: Okay so now I want to talk about pleasure because I think it's a big piece of this. And I will say, earlier I was thinking social justice, tired of the whole body and diet mentality. And I was like there was one other thing that was happening last year and it was that I was understanding for the first time truly how I have delayed pleasure for years, overworking and all the things we do. And a lot of it did have the diet story built into it of when I weigh a certain weight then I can do this fun thing or enjoy myself.

Or sometimes it was money, when I make a certain amount of money then I can enjoy myself. And I think that you talk quite a bit about this in the book. And I think it's something that's so important that we talk about for people is helping them notice when they are and how often. I mean gosh, just the patriarchal society we live in is all about denying ourselves pleasure all the time. And our body's such a piece of that.

So can you speak to that? Because I think it goes everywhere from the physical appearance of our body, it's sexual, it's all the parts that play into this pleasure story, right?

Evelyn: Yeah. So I was really lucky early in my career. I was on a task force that Julia Child put together, and Julia Child, for those that don't remember the great culinary person.

Tobi: Yes, genius.

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Evelyn: Yeah. Got chefs and nutritionists in a room together and said, “Hey, let’s find a way to get along”, basically. And so we met month, after month, after month. And came out with this idea that to all the nutritionists and health people in the world, can you please consider taste when you’re coming up with any of your guidelines. And to all the chefs in the world, can you please consider health. And one of the things we need to recognize is we are wired for pleasure in order to survive. It’s actually part of survival. Food is supposed to be enjoyable.

And I’ve had people afraid to enjoy their eating, thinking, oh my God, if I enjoy it I’m not going to stop. It’s like you know what? It’s actually the opposite. If you enjoy and you’re satisfied, that’s it. Sometimes in the beginning especially you might feel sad when you realize that oh my gosh, that one, you can whatever food you want to. But now that you’re full, why would you want to eat in a way that doesn’t feel good? And there can be a sadness from all the years of deprivation. There’s a part that still might want to eat.

But also knowing from a pleasure standpoint, it’s not – it doesn’t feel so good. And so one of the principles of intuitive eating is kind of the hub of it is aiming for satisfaction in your eating. And I love that – actually I love all the principles. But I love that one because it’s so personal. How does satisfaction feel to you? If you want to end a meal feeling satisfied, well, what does that feel like? Does it feel satisfying to under-eat? Does it feel satisfying to eat to a point where you’re uncomfortably, physically full?

And so looking at this and really getting curious. And I often use pleasure for the hedonic tone and qualities and in eating. What does pleasant hunger feel like? What would it be like to start eating at pleasant hunger? And people go “What?” Because they view hunger as the enemy, it’s like no, it’s a gift, it means you’re alive, it means your body is working. And then what does pleasant fullness feel like? So just with that question, if we can start to tend and befriend that, it’s a really wonderful way to connect with your body and also what your needs are.

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Tobi: I remember in the book when you say that. And you said so many of your clients can tell you exactly what overfull feels like, but they can't tell you what pleasant fullness feels like or what that satisfaction place feels like. And I would say that's true for me. I think I've worked on this in the last couple of years. But prior to that I would say I only knew how to eat past that pleasantness and to where it felt – that was the only way I knew how to stop.

That was the only time my body would scream, stop eating because I was so detached from the satiety and that whole experience, yeah.

Evelyn: Well, yeah, if you start in extreme spots like extreme hunger often it takes more of extreme fullness to feel like you've had enough to eat. So with pleasant fullness, people are surprised to learn that it can start with thinking about food, like yeah, lunch sounds really good, or pizza sounds really good for dinner. That's actually normal. That's not abhorrent. And I sometimes call it polite, and that sounds almost too British. But it's like it's not urgent.

You're looking forward to it, that sounds nice, as opposed to the urge in hunger of like get out of my way, it's the primal hunger where you've crossed over, it's like get out of my way, I'm going to eat you.

Tobi: Right. Well, and I love that when you're even just saying pizza sounds good. If you've been on a diet since you were 12 like me on and off all the time. Even just hearing your body say pizza sounds good, unless you're in one of the moments when you're 'off the wagon' then I would just ignore that pizza, obviously you can't have pizza. What do you mean? And how many times my husband – we've been married 19 years. How many times over the 20 years we've been together that he'll say, "Well, what can mom have right now?"

And that disgusts me now to think about how many years I spent with us deciding, if we were on vacation, the sky's the limit. But if mom happened to be in a diet phase, we had to pick what we were going to have for supper or where we were going to eat based on what I could have at the current...

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Evelyn: Isn't that something, when you start looking at that. And I really encourage people, it's one of the things that ends up happening, there can be this regret, there can be this grieving, all the time lost, all the connection lost. And what I say is, "You know what? It's so understandable from the culture that we were raised in. But now you've got your ticket to freedom." And so part of it is spending some time in that grief and then letting it go, letting it go. And being grateful to yourself that you know what? I'm so glad I'm figuring this out now and not when I'm 70, not when I'm 80.

I've had women especially in that age just now coming to terms with all of this. They thought, well, once they got into high school, once they got into college, once they got the guy, once, all this stuff would come to an end. It's like, no, unless we start working on it, it tends to hijack you because of the culture that we are living in.

Tobi: Yeah. My mom's in her early 70s and there's so many things in your book that I want her to read because I'm like there's still so many of these things I see her hanging onto even after all the years of living that. And it's so normal that we would, unless you do the work. The other thing that's kind of related to this that really blew my mind in the book was when you were talking about how the cycle of dieting, restricting food.

And then being in the phase of where you're off the diet, both ends of that really increase your excitement for both the forbidden foods and your excitement to get back on a new diet. And I could relate to that so much that in essence I think you're saying that we create an overexcitement, what would you call that? Like an exacerbated kind of feeling around both of these things that wouldn't be there if we hadn't gone back and forth from this restriction and on and off, all or nothing kind of cycle, right?

Evelyn: It's so true. And one of the things I think is important to recognize is that actually the role of whatever, you know, diet has so shape shifted the culture. Now they call it lifestyle. I never thought I'd hear keto being called a lifestyle. No, it's not about that. But it is. But for some people it's a coping mechanism because it gives you a focus. It gives you a "fantasy," a

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purpose. And temporarily it puts you in that place of promises, it's not sustainable, it causes harm. And the more you do it the less you can do it.

And then the excitement of going off the diet, so what you're talking about is a really cool principle in science called habituation. That is the novelty gets old after a while. But when you're constantly dieting, food stays exciting. And so when you're off the diet, it's like oh my God, oh my God, I can't wait, can't wait. Whatever the food is, you name it. And then you're often eating it in quantities like oh my gosh, I can't do this, I've got to have more rules and you go back to the next diet. And you're staying in handcuffs.

Tobi: Totally, yeah, except the day before you start the diet then you load up again because you fill before the, you know...

Evelyn: Yeah, we call that last supper eating, farewell to food face, yeah. So all these points of disconnection, that's the thing that's so interesting. In all of these examples you're disconnecting from your true wants and needs.

Tobi: Yeah. In your new book which is just – it's coming out the week I think this podcast goes live, which is called Intuitive Eating for Every Day which I love. And it breaks down your original book which I told you beforehand, I felt like, it's like a textbook. It's really deep. There's a lot there. It's so worth reading but I mean it's a commitment.

Evelyn: It's a lot, it is.

Tobi: But please, I hope everybody reads it. But what I love about the new one is it makes it so easy, bite sized, pun intended.

Evelyn: It is. It is.

Tobi: To really start digesting this, but one of the things that I remember you talking about in the new book, which was related to what we were just talking about is fake intuitive eating. And I think that's really interesting because I'm seeing that. And I know that's why you're talking about it, on diet commercials or on social media or whatever. So can you tell us kind of

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what this fake intuitive eating is? It's so easy for us to find a loophole to stay in diet mentality, isn't it?

Evelyn: That's exactly what it is. It's actually not just you finding the loophole, it's actually sneaky diet culture. They're co-opting our language in ways we've never intended. So one of the things they say is – you've got to remember, the first principle of intuitive eating is reject the diet mentality. So if any program is having you count food, limit food, regulate your food, and they say it's intuitive. No, it's not. It's fake intuitive eating. If they're focused on changing the size of your body in terms of weight loss, that is not intuitive eating.

It's actually one of my most popular posts ever on Instagram, I've run it about two or three times because people get really confused. So I say, "It's understandable that you're confused, but let's set the record straight. This is about you being the boss."

Tobi: Yes. And I think probably the reason they're most confused is probably for a lot of people and maybe myself included, one of the most difficult principles of starting intuitive eating is that you have to completely give up a desire for weight loss, right?

Evelyn: Yes. And here's what I like to say with this. In the culture that we're living in I don't think it's realistic. If that is something that you've been pursuing, that you're suddenly just going to let it – "Thanks, Evelyn, I just let that go just like that." Oh my God. So what I say is, "Can you put it on the backburner? It's really quite understandable you'd want both. You want to be an intuitive eater and you want to pursue weight loss." The problem and the challenge is if that becomes an actionable desire that interferes with the process of intuitive eating.

I don't want anyone to think that you can't be an intuitive eater if you still desire weight loss. But what we want to really set up is that this myth of weight loss causes harm. And it's been so indoctrinated in our culture. It's understandable that it's there. And it takes a while because you go through this place of cognitive dissonance. And even all the health professionals I

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train also, I ask them, “How long did it take for you to embrace this model?” And they’re like, “Oh.” I go, “Exactly.” So we can’t expect our clients or readers of this book to suddenly just change.

It’s like no, this takes a while and it’s okay to be ambivalent in the beginning, that’s why I want to emphasize that there’s no pass or fail in being in the intuitive eating. It’s discovery and learning, discovery and learning, yeah.

Tobi: And I could see over the six months or so that I’ve been doing this work, I can see why you want us to at least kind of park the weight loss.

Evelyn: Yeah, put it in the backburner if you can, yeah.

Tobi: Yeah, I can see why, because there had many moments when I went ahead and let myself have things on the restricted list, often. And like you say in the book, I find myself going in waves. It’s like I can have soft drinks again. And then for two weeks I drink three cokes a day, which I haven’t had in 20 years. And then I’m like okay, yeah, I don’t even like those.

Evelyn: Isn’t that something? I can’t tell you how often I hear that, yeah.

Tobi: But the day after I would have at the beginning, I’d be like oh my God, I had three soft drinks yesterday. The habit is to think I’ve got to go on a diet today. Or I need to just drink water all day, or I need to do something to right the wrong I did yesterday. So I can see why that unless you can really park that weight loss and just become in the beginning and just use it as an awareness tool to be like, “Look, I’m already moving back into that old pattern.” Then we would not really be kind of getting to the source of what the issue is.

Evelyn: And so part of the task, you’re absolutely right, is this awareness, this gentle awareness. And isn’t that interesting how reactive I am? I perceived I did something wrong and now I’m trying to fix it. I perceived I did something wrong, I want to micromanage it. And every time you micromanage you are interfering with your body to see what it would have naturally done on its own. And then that disrupts more trust. So it’s normal

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to feel confused. It's normal to feel panic sometimes. All of these things are all part of the journey.

When you're stuck in diet culture it's so binary, it's so all or none, pass or fail it. Sometimes people tend to take that mentality into intuitive eating. It's like oh my God, I blew it, I didn't eat precisely when I was hungry. I didn't stop. It's like, no, that's how this works. It's this gentle integration.

Tobi: Yeah. And it's so interesting how often, so gosh, there's just – we could have a three day conversation on, there's so much.

Evelyn: We could. I could.

Tobi: One of the other things I remember you talking about was kind of the difference between nibbling or three meals a day. And even that is so culturally bound. And so I watched myself going, oh, because one of the principles requires you to make peace with food. And another one is about you honor your hunger. And so both of those I've seen come up when I eat something. And then maybe at 11 o'clock at night, I'm actually hungry. And my old thought process would be just go to bed, just go to sleep. Wait till tomorrow. Deny your hunger. But now I'm honoring my hunger.

And so I'll watch myself eat something and then I'm like, what sounds good. And of course it's not a carrot. It's something like bread or a cereal or something. And so it's really fascinating to be this watcher of your own thoughts as you're doing the work. And so I've allowed myself in those moments to go, okay, I'm going to eat. And it's funny, I don't die. I don't, like nothing happened.

Evelyn: Right. So you're cultivating your own experience, your own evidence. And that becomes really powerful, really powerful.

Tobi: It's so good. Okay, well, let's also go back to this concept of social media. So one of the other things and I think I started this work actually first in my antiracism work which was kind of diversifying my social feed. And I was like, "Wow, my social feed is very, very white." And then when I started this work I'm like, "My social feed is not only white, it's white and thin." It's

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very thin and the 'ideal' of success. And the aspirational people that we want to follow. And so that's been a really fun fascinating experience.

And in the first book you give several people to follow. But in the new book you give a whole list of social feeds and podcasts to listen to, which is such a great resource. But I'd love for you to talk a little bit about this because I have been fascinated at what my brain has done when I added all sizes of bodies into my feed and some of the ones that were smaller bodies, not that there's anything wrong with anybody having a smaller body. But if they were more triggering to me or they felt more like diet mentality, for at least a period of time I would unfollow those people.

And it was so fascinating to watch and at first some of the bigger bodies I put in my feed if I'm being perfectly honest, I had an aversion to those. My brain wanted to be like, that's not supposed to be that way. And then I watched myself and I was like, "That's fascinating." What happens if you stop and listen to what this person's saying? What if you focus on that being a human being and not a body you're judging?

Evelyn: I love that.

Tobi: And it's been so fun to see what it has then done when I look in the mirror and I've normalized all these body types. And all of a sudden my thoughts about myself are vastly different.

Evelyn: Well, you're changing the narrative. The dominant narrative in media is the white thin idealized body. But within your social feed that you have control of you can see bodies of all different sizes, and genders, and races engaging and amazing. I just found a new account called Curvy Girl Surfing or Curvy Girl Surfer. No, Curvy, and it's women of all these different sizes doing things you don't typically, which feeds into the narrative you have to only be a certain size body or certain type to engage in these activities.

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And so it diversifies your mind when you diversify your feed, and you see all the things that are possible. And you expose yourself to more ideas, so it's wonderful that you're doing that, it's awesome.

Tobi: Yeah. And it fits into that pleasure story too because it completely goes against the fact that you don't have to postpone anything because of your size. When you're putting this in your feed that it's normal to be a runner, or a surfer, or a dancer, or a fashion icon, or anything that you want to be no matter your size, like you said, your gender, if you're transgender, all of those things are all normalized if you choose for them to be in your social feed. And then it is powerful, it is so powerful.

Evelyn: It is. So you could do it in small steps and that would just be just to start adding people in. Another one can be to start removing those. And sometimes people have a hard time because when you're following someone's social feed you sometimes get connected to the stories in their life, there's probably characteristics that you like about them but it's still triggering. And so it's normal also to feel conflicted. And I love what you're doing is and that is you're noticing how it makes you feel. Oh my gosh, you're feeling better, you're seeing all the possibilities.

So these are small actionable changes, and that's part of the reason why I did this book, just one little small thing you can do every day, or just something just to think about. We don't have to have these big realizations and insights and aha moments. There's all this little process that can happen that's really truly meaningful.

Tobi: Well, and I think people don't even know that it's possible and you would know better if it's scientific. I feel like it is. Does it technically actually rewire our brain when we start looking at different things? Because if it doesn't it certainly feels like it has rewired mine to me, to see beauty in different things that are not what I would have defined as beautiful necessarily in my past.

Evelyn: What a great – I don't have the answer to that question. I can certainly say from a wiring aspect, it sounds plausible to me, but it certainly

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widens our perspectives. And we widen our perspective on anything that's possible. So I think from that perspective it's a good thing to be looking at that for sure.

Tobi: I would say this morning I was looking in the mirror and as we're recording this, I was telling you earlier, there's 10 inches of snow on the ground which is very unusual in Arkansas. I was putting on my little thermal leggings and I was looking at my body and I was like, you look really good. And the fascinating thing is I had lost weight last year and I put back all 20 pounds on through Covid and then I stopped the diet mentality. And I look at myself with more love and respect than when I was at any weight less than this which was most of my life.

But I was thinking this morning had I not ever learned, and then later I read that in the book right after that. Had I not ever learned this stuff as a child, would I have been this loving and happy with my body all these years? It's so interesting.

Evelyn: Isn't it? And so you're also raising a good point certainly, and that is body image is in the mind, it's not in the mirror. Yeah, it's how we treat ourselves, how we view ourselves and recognizing all the things that we're capable of doing and feeling in different sizes and so on.

Tobi: So good. A couple of other things that stood out to me, so people are starting to listen and they're like I relate to that, I relate to that, I relate to that. There were several points in the book including when we were talking about complimenting someone on their weight loss. You also talked about when people participate in conversations not only about their own body but about other people's body they have a harder time being satisfied with their body.

I remember you also saying people that are super focused on their body at all in general, whether it's working out or whatever they have a harder time being satisfied with their body. Because kind of the overarching story was just like if you are obsessive about yours or anybody else's body all the time it seems like that translates into less satisfaction with your own body.

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Evelyn: Yeah. And with life I would say because everything gets reduced into body, and size, and types. And so that's where your mind goes as opposed to there's so many other things in the world in which you could be flourishing and having a sense of purpose, whatever that is for you. Whether it's raising your kids, or whether it's solving a problem to climate change, or cancer, or something like that, but they're all different types of things. But when we stay in this place of objectification our world stays very, very small.

And then when you're not feeding your body enough your mind stays small because as a matter of survival, your mind just starts focusing on food in general, that's a survival response.

Tobi: Yes. Just having the awareness of how many hours in my 49 years I have spent already – 39 if I started at age 10. How many hours or even would it equal days, or months, or years that I've focused on food, or body, or diet, or one side or the other of that coin of weight loss? And how much time we get back in our life, not to [crosstalk] on that so much, but just how much we get back when we stop thinking about that all.

Evelyn: Yeah, it's profound and it's hard to put it into words because you don't realize how much time is being taken up. And then it's truly things that you can be doing things that are meaningful for you.

Tobi: Really, because how often are always saying, "I don't have time to have lunch with my friends. I don't have time to take up painting. I don't have time for whatever." And if we just stopped that obsession about our bodies and diet, we would have all the time to do all the things that we keep saying we don't have time to do.

Evelyn: Yeah. And so first it's about self-connecting my wants, my needs, nourishing my body. And when we self-connect like that, get our needs met then we are better at connecting with others.

Tobi: Yes. And don't you think, I mean I know it's not even – I don't even have to ask the question. But I would love to hear more of your thoughts on

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that very thing. Because not only do we disconnect from what we're supposed to be eating, I think that whole pleasure piece is involved. I think women consistently disconnect from our desires and shove them down, don't you think?

Evelyn: I do, it's a repression and suppression. And you get to this point of numbness. You get to this point of not even knowing what you need and what you are feeling, especially if your other focus, and there's nothing wrong with wanting to be of service to other people and causes. It's beautiful actually, but you've got to get your needs met first. That's part of the key, yeah.

Tobi: So before we go, I want to talk about the whole health issue that comes up for so many people, especially if we've been hearing this message all the time, we're still hearing it from our doctors. We're still hearing respected people, for me, I open up Instagram and Dr. Mark Hyman is saying everything in opposition to what we're talking about today. And nothing against him but it is what is happening all the time. And so you talk about, maybe in both books, definitely in the first book about health at every size, which I loved.

But I think in general one of the things that stops some of us is this fear of being unhealthy and we've accidentally or unknowingly is a better word, bought into the weight is health, or overweight is unhealthy. So when people are starting to do this work, if that's the story that they're afraid of, if I'm overweight I'm going to be unhealthy, I'm going to shorten my life. How do they start to overcome those fears?

Evelyn: Well, I think part of what it is, is we have to acknowledge that these fears have been indoctrinated from our culture and sadly through healthcare policy. It's been hijacked by diet culture. If intentional weight loss was a drug there is no way it would ever have gotten approved for use as a medication, with a failure rate of 95% for the vast majority of people. It causes the opposite of what the intention is. Up to 75% of people will gain back more weight than what they lost.

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And then when you look at how it increases body dissatisfaction, increases risk of eating disorders, increases weight cycling which in of itself can also have its own health ramifications. There's a lot that's really there. And I have wrapped my head around this. How can there be such a big body of research, there's a couple of things that to me might explain it. One, there's a phenomenon called maksimal vice reflex and it's named after the doctor who discovered that if you wash your hands you will save lives.

Now, at the time he was laughed out of medicine. He did a small study and showed that, yeah, if you wash your hands you won't kill your patients. And the doctors at the time, I think it was the 17th century, they said, "That's preposterous, we're gentlemen, we know our patients and we don't need to wash our hands." Years later germs theory was validated by Dr. Pasteur. And so maksimal vice reflex is named after this phenomenon, when new information comes along that refutes the dominant belief it's met with incredulity.

And we've seen this in modern times with E. coli, ulcers used to be thought as caused by a lifestyle, you've just got to change what you're eating. And these two doctors discovered no, it's a bacteria. And the GI elite in medicine is like, "No, that's not the case." And finally one of the doctors infected himself with E. coli, proved that was the issue. And they got the Nobel Prize in medicine. So that's part of what explains it. But I think if we go back to Sabrina Strengths book; looking at the racial roots of fat phobic, combine the two together.

And then the other thing is looking at your own experience. What is your own experience in your body in weight loss in terms of pursuing intentional weight loss? That, I find it becomes really meaningful when you look at your pattern and then realize wow, all this research validates what you've been saying all along. It's not sustainable. It has nothing to do with willpower. This is gaslighting, medical gaslighting. And so if you're interested in health, we don't need health for moral dignity and respect.

However, if you're seeking health we just do it in ways that are not weight centric. Health includes our psychological health. Health includes our social

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health, isolation, all these types of things. How about the sleep that you're getting? How about moving your body in ways that feel good? These are all ways that we can support our health that have nothing to do with the size of the body.

Tobi: It's so good. I underlined, so we can forget it, you were talking about how people feel guilty a lot from food but it's related to what you're talking about. You said, "Guilt and morality have no place in the eating world." And that's so good because we totally believe that those are tethered I think.

Evelyn: You're right. I see it a lot. I started it with asking my patients kind of in a smartass but kind way. It's like when they said they were guilty for eating something. It's like, "Well, did you steal the donut?" "No."

Tobi: I remember that, yeah.

Evelyn: "Did you kill the person to get it?" "No."

Tobi: Yes. And I love both of these things, even in this health conversation of guilt and morality, that's not the conversation. That's a totally different conversation than health. Health is moving your body, it's mental wellness, it's all of those things.

Evelyn: Yeah. It's connection; it's all of these things. And what's really interesting, all the studies looking at weight and health are what's called – most of the studies are association studies, epidemiological. It is not cause and effect. Those studies are missing out on very important data like your social health, like social determinants of health, trauma. And so it's not this black and white thing that it's made out to be.

Tobi: Well, yeah, and the pandemic, I'm just thinking as you're saying that, it's so funny. Even though a lot of us have said, "We gained weight during the pandemic." And we kind of joke about it or laugh about it, it's not the weight that everybody's panicking about right now, it's our mental health and this loneliness that's happened with the lack of connection to other people, right?

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Evelyn: Absolutely, absolutely.

Tobi: Interesting and yeah, it's such an interesting topic. One thing that came to mind too, I saw a meme last week and I think it was probably on one of the intuitive eating many sites on social media. And I can't remember if they said, dieting or thinness, one or the other. But it was saying that – let's say dieting. It basically said, "Dieting is designed to keep Black women oppressed and white women in check." And I was like, whoa, that is true and deep.

And when you talk about patriarchy, when you talk about racism, and when people really start to understand the roots, like you were saying, of where this came from. And to create that hierarchy and prop up white women, keep Black women oppressed. But then in the propping up it's also like imprisoning the white women for the rest of our lives to this ideal, the story, the smallness, the shrinking body, all of these things. That one really hit me and I've thought about it so many times since.

So I interchange, thinness, dieting, diet culture, any of that for that concept to remind myself all the time.

Evelyn: It's oppression. It's a form of oppression. And when we're all free it sets everybody free which is why we need to be looking at oppressive systems like racism and so on. It's impacting all of us whether we know it or not.

Tobi: Totally. Well, if everybody's ready now, they're like, "Sign me up for all of it." And they want to find you, find your new books, where can they get all those wonderful things?

Evelyn: Oh my gosh. Well, my website evelyntribole.com, Instagram, I'm the most active on. In fact I have a 10-day series, including videos if people just want to get a sense of what intuitive eating is, that's a quick way; I'm always looking at free resources. Also our intuitiveeating.org website for health professionals, we train and certify people in this method.

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We have now over 1300 people in 32 countries which is just exciting to me, spread the word and change the system.

So we have a lot of work to do but they're doing it, and the books, you can get wherever books are available to you, so yeah.

Tobi: Yes. And for the new book that's just coming out. Anything else that you would like people to know that we didn't cover, because that's kind of the whole reason you're here? Although, I mean that was the impetus to get you on the show. The whole reason you're here is obviously everything we've talked about and all your work. But is there anything about the new book that you want anybody to know before?

Evelyn: Yeah. One of the things I'll say besides it being something you can do every day. It's not just the 10 principles. They're supporting categories like mealtime meditations. How to cultivate trust, because trust often seems so broken, having body affirmations and things like these. So these are little gems that help support you on the journey and yet not so big where you're like oh my God, I can't do another day.

Tobi: Yeah, I love it, like some of the days are literally the tiniest little paragraphs.

Evelyn: Yeah, just a little mantra.

Tobi: Just to plant a little seed to think about for the day. And then other days were like here's all these amazing social media accounts to follow. So I loved it. I thought it was a great mix of like a little bit bigger challenges some days and then some things that were just so simple and easy. It's hard to find an excuse not to do that.

Evelyn: Yeah, it's just a way to help keep you connected to the process. And you can do it any which way that you want to. So I'm glad that you like it. It really is a book that came from my heart.

Tobi: Good, it's so good. So, well, I'm on the last chapter, because I've taken a few months to read the...

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Evelyn: Good. You've got to go at a pace that feels right for you, honestly, yeah.

Tobi: Yes. But now I'm like okay, now I want to go back and listen to it on audio and see what I hear when I listen to it differently than when I'm reading it, because I think you get different experiences.

Evelyn: You know what? That is so true. In fact this new book I did all the audio on it. And I'll tell you, it was really different in that way, to hear the voice and the – because I can hear my voice back. It was just – anyway, whatever way it works for you and whatever helps you connect I'd say that's what I would do.

Tobi: I love it. I love it. Okay, well, thank you so much for being here, it was a total honor.

Evelyn: Thank you.

Tobi: I feel indulgent that I got to have you to myself for almost an hour.

Evelyn: You know what? I am thrilled that you did this. I'm here to help change the world. And you're helping doing this by spreading and amplifying the message. But more importantly you're doing the work. And when other people see what you're doing, or I've had people say, "Oh my God, you've changed so much and you're so happy. What are you doing? You're not even preaching anything." They just see it and they want some of that. Where is this ease coming from?

Tobi: I feel that, yes, I feel more joy and more ease in life, around food, the body. It's not even kind of believable yet because it's still kind of new.

Evelyn: Of course, yeah, that's common.

Tobi: And so you almost don't even trust it yet, but it feels so good. I'm like I'll have more of that, please.

Evelyn: Yeah, exactly, exactly.

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Tobi: So thank you for that gift. Thank you for being here. Thank you for all of your wisdom and I can't wait for everybody to hear this and to get their hands on these books.

Evelyn: Thank you so much for having me here.

Tobi: You're very welcome.

Okay. So are you ready? Are you ready to have freedom? Are you ready for joy like you haven't known it in the past? Are you ready to give up the prison of diet mentality and all the things we've put ourselves through for years? Well, if you are this is your answer. It's working beautifully for me. It's a process. It's a practice. I can see it will be something I'll be working on for years. But it instantly creates results. And I'm so glad I'm on this journey and I hope that you get on it too if that sounds like a fit for you.

So check out Evelyn's brand new book, by the time you hear this it is out, it is available wherever you buy your books, Intuitive Eating for Every Day. I would suggest buying the original one too, Intuitive Eating, Evelyn and her co-creator Elyse wrote that amazing book. There's a fourth edition which is the one that's currently out. It's very up-to-date. I feel like it came out last year, very current. Such good resources and information in addition to the anti diet approach itself. So check it all out and let Evelyn and me know what you think. And I mean it, I really mean it.

I ask you all the time to let me know what you think but this one I really want to know what you think because dieting and the whole weight loss, and weight stigma and all of that has been such a part of my life for, gosh, probably close to 40 years now. And I'm so thrilled to be freeing myself from it.

And I want to hear from those of you who either also are doing this work or who want to do this work because I think it's so timely. I think this is the perfect moment, like a tipping point where there's a whole new life that's being breathed into Evelyn's work just because of where we are in the

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world today in 2021. So let us both know what you think. I can't wait to hear from you. And I'll see you back here next week with another great episode of the *Design You* Podcast. Bye for now.

Thank you so much for listening to the *Design You* podcast, and if you are ready to dig deep and do the important work we talk about here on the podcast of transforming your mindset and creating a scalable online business model, there has never been a more important time than right now. So join me and the incredible creative entrepreneurs in my *Design You* coaching program today. You can get all the details at TobiFairley.com.