

Sophie: This season. I'm obsessed with superfit hero, just like us. Superfit hero is on a mission to make fitness more inclusive, but instead of a podcast, they make fun premium, active wear sizes, extra small to five XL. Oh and their leggings don't just fit our bodies. They have pockets too. This season you can use code s a F for 15% off super fit heroes, leggings, shorts and sports bras. I have an amazing set from them and I also have bike shorts that I wear like 24 seven they're comfy. They don't roll up and I get compliments every time I wear an outfit with them. So why don't you match with me. Had to superfit hero.com/s a f for your next comfy workout or lounge day. Use Code Saf on superfit hero.com we are doing a collaboration with daisy la, which is an indie fashion brand local to la, run by our friend Dani Nagel.

Sophie: We collaborated on a beautiful shirt with a design that features bodies of several shapes and sizes and abilities, dancing and hanging out and having a great time and the phrase allies of all size on it. It's a really beautiful expression of the fatmilies' vibe and we're so excited to offer it to y'all. If you want to get your hands on our collab shirt, follow the link in the show notes and go to daisy la.com when you use code SAF, you'll get 10% off your entire purchase of all daisy brand items. We have sizing descriptions and more about the shirt on our Instagram at. She's all fat pod. So again, that's Code Saf at daisy La for 10% off daisy brand items. Where that shirt to show you're a part of the fatmilly. Woo. I'm Sophie.

April: I'm April

Sophie: and this is, she's all fat. The podcast for body positivity, radical self love and chill vibes. Only this week we're continuing our conversation about fat, ethical fashion. This time with Nicolette Mason of Prem and Allie Ayers of Bissy Swim. April, what do you have to say?

April: I'm Recording before bed.

Sophie: Okay. Now we've got some more obsessions from our girl April.

April: Okay. What's up everybody? I'm back. It's April again. I'm obsessed with some stuff. I hope you're good. I hope you're obsessed with some stuff in a healthy, supportive way for you and not a destructive way. I just hope you're enjoying yourself. We're having a hot girl summer. Amen. Amen. So here are my obsessions. Number one, she was like everyone else on Twitter. I'm getting into love island. Believe it or not. I was not into love island from the beginning. I just like, it missed me somehow. You know, I'm late to British stuff, but also like I kind of lately feel like I'm tapped out on reality TV. You know, I'm booked in busy with my 90 day fiance and I haven't had a lot of space in my heart for new reality TV. That's it. The new friend from work begged me to watch love island.

April: She said, especially since I like Tarrace house, I might like the juxtaposition of this being like the most absolute garbage fire version of Tarrace house. And She's absolutely correct. Now, here's the thing, I'm only a couple episodes in and I'm starting with season five so I can't give you the like full tea, full perspective on the show. What I will say is I'm having a blast watching it so far, sort of in the background while I do other things. The

people are extremely entertaining. They seem to have no moral compass or soul, like they don't operate like normal people. The last episode I was watching, a young woman was crying because a man that she met 48 hours prior had been disappointed in her for going on a date with a new man and she really liked the original man because he had a surfer look and she was in just surfer dudes and so she was crying and I thought to myself, I said, April, that's not how normal people operate.

April: And it intrigued me. So I like love island. I liked the fact that they're all sort of in like basically one large bed together. I don't understand it. I love to watch them like zombies getting ready in the morning and talking about who kissed, who. Like I like the rude narrator. I just, it's so bizarre to me and like almost uncomfortable to watch, but I can't look away. So I'm says with Love Island, that's number one. Number two, Younger, which I've been hyping to you for years now. If you haven't watched younger, I assume it's because you hate me. Younger is back at season six. I think it's on a new network. I Dunno, I don't have cable. I just buy it on Amazon. It's the best. It is back better than ever. I feel like younger is such an incredible show because it reinvents itself every year.

April: So like this year is a totally different show than last year. The stakes are different. The circumstances are different. The characters are on the same, but they're growing. They're getting new outfits or new relationships. There's maybe a new child or two. I am obsessed with younger, need to be watching younger. Once again, if you aren't watching younger, I'm taking it personally next up. Okay. A problematic fav. If you don't know about why Daniel Caesar is problematic, I'm not going to tell you, go ahead and Google it. It's a whole thing. I don't want to get into it. We all have our problematic faves. I don't want to talk about it. Whatever. Leave me alone. Live my life. You live your life. Okay, so Daniel, Caesar is a singer, he's Canadian. He has a new album out and I was really trying to like resist because again, he is really problematic.

April: But I saw that he has a song with Brandy and if you know anything about me, then you know that Brandi Norwood is like literally my achillies heel. Like I love Brandy Norwood. She's my black Cinderella. She low key killed somebody in the early thousands. Choose the voice of an angel. Okay. And she apologize for that thing with the lady in the early thousands. Um, they have a song together on this new album. So I was like, oh my God, okay, let me just quickly peak in like low key. Just want to feel it out. Turn it on. It's incredible. It's so beautiful. Their voices melt together like peanut butter. And chocolate. Okay. It is incredible. Um, so you need to check out his new album. It's called like, so it's like something about therapy. It's called like therapy three or like, like, like, like sessions in therapy. Like had some theme about like exploring your inner demons or whatever. It doesn't matter. He has a voice of an angel sort of like neo. So alternative, very introspective. I listened to him in private. Again, he is problematic. He is cancelled. That said, I love the album and that's it. Back to you. Soph

Sophie: okay. My obsessions this week, um, are number one. I've had this song stuck in my head all week. I'm going to link in the shownotes this email song playlist that one of my Instagram friends made because it's really throwing me back. There's like a emo night dance night at one of the places here in La and it's really fun to go and just feel like middle school again if you're my age. So like 28. Um, but the song, Hey, I can get sexual to remember that song. It's just been like in my head all week. Maria drop a clip,

Audio Clip: **music**

Sophie: And my second obsession is like weekend trips. This summer I'm doing a couple of weekend trips with my like different groups of best girlfriends and I'm just really excited for all of them. I'm on one right now and it's just like really nice and restorative. Being in La is amazing. I love La, but sometimes you just need to get out for a little bit. Going somewhere else in a new context always feels like somehow it's more special than just spending time at my house all weekend with my friends. Even if we're doing the exact same thing. I don't know. Something about being in a new place, even if you're just hanging out at an airbnb that you all chipped in for is like really special weekend trips forever. Okay. And finally I'm using this new bunch of like serums and oils. I really like the Kiehl's like cannabis face oil. Not to be like a stereotype but it's really soothing and nice.

Sophie: I really like it. I'm also really liking using my three different very trusty sunscreens. Number one, Kula brand sunscreen. I like their face glow drops. Number two you Dr Barbara's derm. These are too expensive, like don't buy these but they're really nice. They're like the definitely the nicest face sunscreen I have because it's like absurdly expensive. Um, I got like a sample pack that had like a couple of different other Dr Barbara Derm things in it and they're really great but like again too expensive. And then number three supergoop sunscreens. Also obsessed with, just have like also a lot of the Neutrogena baby ones I just throw in my bag so I can swipe it on my chest or on my like, you know, ear, neck area because don't forget those areas. Got a sunscreen yourself. The Summer Babes.

Sophie: Let's move on to our apple podcast review Shoutouts thank you so much to the following people for leaving a review. The more you do, the closer we get to maybe sometime in the future at some point perhaps being on new and noteworthy. Thank you to the following people, mayor, one, one, one nine nine six Sofia at swanky, grandma, the amber show, dyn, t y n e Dine Ting, I dunno, m case 92 and toNika and thank y'all so much. And also we'd like to give shout outs to some of our patrons, the people who give us money on patreon.com and get some audio and a bunch of other stuff in return are the ones who allow us to keep doing this show. So thank you so much. She'll like, we depend on you much more than like anything else. So, um, thank you all to Terry Rodak, Laura F, Sarah King, Harry Minnow, Harry, we love you. Harry, Sarah Ross and Elisa Rayon Cola Matangi thank you all so much for being our patrons.

Sophie: All right, moving on to tip jar. I wanted to let y'all know that our Intern Freya started a fat fashion Instagram. You can follow them at Freya Dot is fat for Cute Fun Pics and style inspiration. We're also featuring Freya and um, other people on our Instagram every Tuesday as part of what we're calling fatshion Tuesday. I asked for sewing tips awhile ago on my personal Instagram and one of our Hannah's Katie Hitchcock wrote in with some sweet tips. I'm sharing them here for all of Y'all who listened to our seems fake episode and also want to sew clothes for yourself. So Katie said, check out the love to sew podcasts. Um, some of the later episodes have great info about fabric sewing machines, surgers and other helpful tips. Also clothes making mavens is another sewing podcasts and has unique tips like sewing for menstruation, um, at checkout, the curvy

sewing collective, which is specifically on plus size sewing and they have a Facebook group.

Sophie: And then, um, she also sent in some info about machines and we will put a little bit of that in the show notes. Um, think sewing. Hannah, let us know if y'all listen to those podcasts. I do want to give a little warning that the love to sew podcasts have some quote size cringey stuff in the early episodes is what um, this Hannah said, but uh, the later ones are supposedly really helpful. So let us know if you are a sewing Hannah, if you'd like to make your own clothes. I'm interested in this. I really want to start making my own clothes. Okay. Call for submissions. What does your queer body look like? If you are queer, let us know like how you think about your body in terms of fatness and queerness and like if those things intersect for you and how, um, we have an upcoming episode with the two wonderful hosts of Nancy podcast and that's what we talked about. We want to include some voice memos from y'all. Um, and finally we have a shout out to our Facebook group. Of course. Um, this week people are talking about purity culture, their first tattoos and what you add to your scrambled eggs. Um, if you join our Patron at a team Paisley Moomoo, then you can be in the Facebook group and if you join at Team I Love Bread, you get an extra minisode every week. Um, so thank you all again for being a part of our fatmily. And here we go into the meat of it

April: and the meat of it.

Sophie: Welcome to part two in our series on fashion. Last time you tuned in and we talked to Carissa of Fatgirlflow, Katie of Ori and Danny from Daisy la. Definitely a good primer on how indie brands can produce some quality ethical plus size clothes. You may have also heard our sponsored mini-sode with 11 Honore, which touched on some more high fashion questions. Today we're going to dive even deeper to the specifics of production with Nicolette mason of prem and then talk swimsuits with Allie Ayers of Bissy swim. Let's do it. Here we are with the incredible Nicolette Mason, one half prem, one whole herself. Honestly, you don't need an introduction, but do you want to introduce yourself to our listeners?

Nicolette: I like never assume I don't need an introduction, so a little bit about me. My name is Nicolette Mason. I'm a Los Angeles native. I kind of fell into the body positive fashion, capital f fashion world a little over a decade ago. I had started as a blogger and was brought in house at Marie Claire as a contributing editor and columnist there for the page, Big girl in a skinny world. I was there for five years. I want to say I did not name the column that I inherited it, but it was a really amazing experience. From there, I had a lot of different consulting opportunities for brands ranging from ASOS to Target Eliquis, modcloth additionelle designed a couple of capsule collections with other brands and about four years ago, Gaby and I, Gabby, Greg, who definitely doesn't need an introduction, got together and just we're at this place of frustration but also extreme optimism and enthusiasm for where the plus size industry was going and decided to join forces and work on creating a brand.

Nicolette: About two years later that brand Prem came to life. We launched July of 2018 as a size 12 to 30 brand and it's been a lot of fun.

Sophie: Well I know for me and for a lot of other listeners, you were definitely like the first slash main like plus size blogger that I followed when I was getting into body positivity. I read your column and then I was like, okay, I'll try this and like Instagram and then I was like, hm. She seems happy. Like I'm very suspicious of it.

Nicolette: I know, right? It's like wait, you can like be different and happy.

Sophie: It was wild to me. I saw you being like fem and like also queer and that was like part of my journey to figuring out that I was bi was being like, oh you can be fat and queer and not like more mask or androgynous. I didn't know that because I told seen that before.

Nicolette: I know visibility is really powerful in that way because you kind of need to see a possibility of something. Yeah. That was a really revolutionary thing for my own like coming out and my self discovery journey was like meeting other femmes and then meeting fat femmes and like meeting people who love their bodies. So yeah, it's powerful shit and I think that's like, it's a very full circle thing for me of why Gaby and I created our line too is because we know the power of visibility and of seeing a mirror of yourself and we wanted in some capacity to like be able to hold up the mirror for more people. Early in our days when we were pitching ourselves to different companies, I'm looking for partners, you know they would talk a lot about like mass appeal and we're like well we don't want to appeal to every single person.

Nicolette: That to me that's part of the failure, the plus size fashion industry as a whole is that it treats the plus size consumer. Like it's one person and that's not true. Like there should be really, in my opinion, a plurality of points of view and voices and things that appeal to different lifestyles, different types of people because that's where you get diversity. That's where you get to have fun and create your own lane a little bit. But you know also on the flip side of it, like in order to be a business that thrives and survives, like things do need to sell.

Sophie: Okay. I want to go through some of the behind the scenes of prem. What is your like elevator pitch for prem? Like what is the fashion point of view for prem?

Nicolette: So for us the really, really short point of view is that we want to be a destination for the body positive it girl, quote unquote girl can be any gender by the way, who really wants to have fun with fashion and who does feel confident in their body and wants a place where they can go to self express. So we really were looking at the market and the white space that we saw was kind of contemporary fashion for someone who has aged out of brands like forever 21 or fashion Nova but who aren't necessarily a lane Bryant customer either and like where does that person go? We just felt like there was virtually no brands that really spoke to that person and it helps a lot that we are that person, we are in a community with those people and so we were hearing like pretty consistent feedback along those lines that like I want to top shop, I want something like Zara.

Nicolette: I don't know that either of those brands are going to be having this inclusivity conversation in meaningful way and I don't think, I guess

Sophie: that's literally not their brand.

Nicolette: And I also don't, and this is I realized like fairly controversial to say, I don't necessarily think every brand should do that, especially if it's just a money grab. If they're not going to be thoughtful about it and truly include that customer and that voice in a meaningful way, if they're not going to think about fit and invest in fit and a really conscious way. I don't want topshop to just be like, okay, fine, like we'll add a couple more sizes so you guys can shut up about this.

Sophie: Like you're not looking for Brandy Melville to make like a plus size

Nicolette: To me, that's not, that's, that's a money grab. That's not a meaningful expansion.

Sophie: So given that, that was your starting point, now what happens when you design a piece of clothing? Like walk me through the production process.

Nicolette: It's kind of like different for every piece of clothing, but generally it starts for us with style first and design first. So we will think about specific silhouettes or colors or fabrics, textures. Sometimes it starts with the fabric. Um, and we design around that material and the sourcing becomes a big part, the conversation. But it's generally like myself and Gabby saying, Oh my God, I wish I could wear a pink glitter suit. That is where we go on. Then we're like, okay, where the fuck do we get a pink glitter? Like that is generally how it works. So, um, and the sourcing side of it is actually like really, really tricky. And probably one of the places that I think like on the consumer side, we take for granted the most and it becomes especially important in the plus size conversation because of the standard with the fabrics.

Nicolette: I think when brands say things like, oh, the materials cost too much, it's literally because they are constrained by the width of the fabric

Sophie: Can you explain what that means.

Nicolette: So if I'm making a maxi skirt and I know that it's a very full Maxie skirt and the yield, so that's the amount of fabric that you need on average per size run. Okay. So if I'm making sizes 12 to 30 I need to take into consideration like the average number of yards per piece. So it's like very granular and technical.

Sophie: That's what I think is interesting. People don't know this at all.

Nicolette: So if I know that my yield per piece is about 14 yards of fabric,

Sophie: meaning that's the amount of fabric you need to make the skirt on average.

Nicolette: So the size 12 will needs fewer yards, the size 30, we'll need more yardage and so on. All of that affects then how you create the pattern for the fabric. So the pieces that were literally, you know, cutting and then sewing together, it, it all kind of has to be mapped out. Literally it, it's more fabric to make the clothing. It's in order to map it out and

create this puzzle where you're being as efficient as possible, it becomes very just tricky and challenging based on the width of the fabric. There is just a lot that goes into each of those decisions and that affects the ultimate design also because you know, if the fabric that we're designing into ends up being \$150 for just the raw materials without labor cutting, sewing, design, um, trims, packing, shipping, et Cetera, all of those go into your cost of goods.

Sophie: So once Nicolette has her design and fabric, they have to make a fit pattern and a fit sample, which they fit directly on a model using the sample size 18 or 20 and then then design goes into grading, oh grading. Remember that Chris had told us about it in part one. That's where the design gets made into all of its other sizes. And it's hard for plus size designers because the grading between plus sizes is way bigger than between straight sizes. That's why some straight sized clothing designers try to expand their sizes just by grading up their original designs. And when they do that, their clothes don't freaking fit like a size 20 graded from a straight size actually fits more like a 14 or 16 so when you're making plus sizes, it's really essential to create a whole new fit and pattern and change the grading system. All right, let's jump back into that Maxi skirt we're making

Nicolette: So this is a really, really important piece and I think especially when people compare super mass market brands versus smaller brands or independent brands and so on is not something that can be understated. The quantity and volume at which a company produces clothing greatly impacts the cost of goods. Say a brand like target is producing 20,000 units of the Maxi skirt. It might cost them only \$20 to make it because the more you make, the cheaper it gets. There's like a whole economies of scale that happens for us to produce a hundred of them. It might cost \$80 I'm just like throwing numbers. Sure, sure, sure. No basis in reality, but the fewer that you make, the more expensive it is to produce them. Even though your cost of development, whether you're a target level or you're a Prem level or relatively fixed, it costs the same amount to develop a piece of clothing, whether you're making 50 or a hundred or 10,000 so if you're able to make 10,000 the cost of development across those 10,000 pieces, you know, is divided by 10,000 you're only making 50 or a hundred it's a much more significant cost.

Nicolette: And so one of the things I've heard before is like, oh well then why don't you make more of them? Okay cool. But when you go into production, you actually have to pay for it ahead of time. Um, so if we wanted to make 10,000 maxi skirts, we would have to pay for the production and for the materials and for the Labor for 10,000 skirts.

Sophie: Yeesh 10,000 skirts sounds stressful. Nicolette told me that there are a few important factors that help her and Gabby figure out how many skirts or other pieces to produce. Number One, availability of fabric. If you only have 600 yards of Cheetah print fabric, you can only make so many cheetah print maxi skirts. Number two demand. That's how many skirts they think they'll sell. Number three size ratio. This goes back to the puzzle pieces thing. There has to be a set ratio across the size run in order to cut the patterns and make that whole puzzle work together and cost. Making 10,000 skirts is expensive now that we all know exactly how to produce large scale, extended sizing and also cute designs. I wanted to talk to Nicolette about changes she wants to see in the larger fashion production world that would make this process a lot easier for her and Gabby

Nicolette: personally as someone who owns a brand, someone who is thinking very much at the forefront of a lot of these conversations. I've worked with so many brands. The education piece of it is really one of the biggest hurdles. Primarily that's because for the majority of plus size customers, there's never been many options. When you've been deprived of access to a thing and you've only ever experienced it in this one framework in this one way, one format, it can be very difficult to understand other approaches. So if people are conditioned to only being able to shop from Walmart, Kohl's, JC penny, et Cetera, when you suddenly have a Prem or a Mara Hoffman or a Veda or universal standard and they all have very different approaches to manufacturing to, to the supply chain in general. Yeah, to the, to exactly to sizing to fabrics, to sourcing to Labor.

Nicolette: It's no longer like an apples to apples conversation. It's just not so there needs to be a lot of education around like understanding that nuance

Sophie: and that's hard cause like we, Americans especially are trying to just be Amazon consumers essentially. Right? Like we're trained to, you know, we want our product and we want it now .

Nicolette: I think eventually we're all going to be forced over to more ethical shit because it's just not sustainable what we're doing now. I agree. It doesn't have to be all or nothing. We can actually all make more informed decisions on a daily basis that improve and lessen our impact on the world.

Sophie: I hear that a lot from people that they feel very overwhelmed by the things they would have to do and learn to feel like they were making more ethical choices.

Nicolette: Well, just start with one area.

Sophie: Yeah, exactly. With Prem, what are the like ethical and sustainability choices you had to make in order to make it feasible?

Nicolette: Sustainability for us is also a conversation about people and it's a conversation about ethics in, in labor and so here in la we work with a fair wage factory. All of the workers and sowers have health benefits. They earn a living wage. That was something that was really important for us with our overseas production. We also work with compliant factories. Um, again, this is like a certification. It's third party verified that that's the ethics and labor conditions of factories. There's definitely this presumption that every factory overseas is a sweatshop. That's very much not true. There are also sweat shops in the United States. In fact, everyone's iPhone was basically made in a sweatshop. Foxconn is evil. Yeah. I mean I, there is no ethical consumption under capitalism period, but you know a lot of factories overseas like do have very, very stringent ethics and labor practices that they have to enforce.

Nicolette: Especially some of the largest brands in the world. Their exposure that they have through these factories like they have to be very stringent and enforce real ethics

Sophie: I don't necessarily think made in La is or made in America as the be all end all of ethical whatever. I think it's like an option.

Nicolette: I think it should be an option. It should be a more accessible option.

Sophie: Yeah. It's impossible to say anything is like really 100% ethical. Honestly. It's like I know these things. Are these brands say that they're ethical? What does that mean? Okay. They say that that means they're made in the U S and they pay fair wages. Okay. Where does the fabric come from? Okay. What is the fabric made out of? Okay. Where does that come from? Right. Okay. Who, who like, who shared those sheep, right? Like where is that like are they being paid? Who you know, are the sheep being like there's just so many.

Nicolette': Right, right. It's really overwhelming. And also there's just no end to, you know, that Portlandia Scotch where they like go to a restaurant and they ask about like, you know, farm the chicken ones from and like what was its name and what was its life

Portlandia: Please let me know. I guess I do have a question about the chicken. If you could just tell us a little bit more about it. Uh, the chicken is a heritage breed, a woodland raised chicken that's been fed a diet of sheep's milk, soy and hazelnuts. [inaudible] local. Yes, absolutely it is. Is that USDA organic or Oregon Organic or Portland Organic? It's just all across the board. Organic hazelnuts. These are local. And how big is the area where the chickens are able to roam free? I'm sorry to interrupt. I have exactly the same question. Four acres, right? So here is the chicken you'll be enjoying tonight. His name was Colin. You're his papers. Okay. They do a lot to make sure that their chickens, uh, uh, are very happy. When you say they, I mean who are these people raising colon? It's a farm that's located about a 30 kilometers. Brands

Nicolette: A lot of Brands use sustainability as a buzz word. Yes. And aren't really totally transparent about what that means. So I'm always like pretty skeptical of brands that like really drive that home as like a way to brand or market themselves because that just means something different.

Sophie: Okay. Final question. Is there anything else you want our listeners, the fatmily to know?

Nicolette: It's important for everyone to remember and this is in terms of like all types of consumers. I'm definitely in terms of plus size, fashion and the smaller, newer brands that exist like ours, like Corissa says, is that like there's real humans on the other side of those companies. There's humans making your clothing. There are humans literally sowing your pieces together. There are humans packing your orders and all of those humans deserve to be compensated for their labor, for their work, for their minds. We can all make slightly better, more informed decisions each day that lessen our impact without having to like feel the pressure trying to be perfect sets people up for failure. Yes. And every area in every part of life. Yeah. Even like in terms of how you view yourself and yes, body positivity and everything. Like when we put an expectation on people to be perfect, it just sets them up to fail and I don't want, whether it's body positivity or thinking about sustainability or thinking about accessibility issues for

anyone to feel like they can't try to do better because they're so scared of making a mistake. We're all gonna make mistakes, all parts of life, but like we can hopefully like learn from them and do better by others. Does that even make sense?

Sophie: Yes, that was perfect. Okay. Thank you so much for coming on this show. I hope you will come back again. I would love to please look in the show notes for links to all of Nicolette stuff Prem stuff and we'll drop the links there for like whatever cute thing they have coming out.

Nicolette: Speaking of very on topic. We kind of did like a whole audit of our inventory and found some quote unquote archival Prem on my end. So there might be some old favorites making a very limited comeback around the time that this episode comes out. God, get your jumpsuits everyone. Yeah. Any. Once they're gone, they're gone. Like for real, like restock is not happening, so yeah. Wow. Hot Tip. Hot Tip. Hot Tip. All right. Thank you Nicola. Thank you.

Sophie: Wow. Love Nicolette. Love Prem. They've sponsored the pod before I buy onto their staff. Love them. We're going to take a quick break and then I'll be back with Allie. Ayers from Bissy swim.

Sophie: GLDN wants to change the way you experienced jewelry or necklaces. Rings, bracelets and earrings are made by hand. When you order. That way you can customize your piece, get a special chain length for your chubby wrist or turn that inside joke into a wearable piece. Golden makes it personal. You probably saw it or instead of that, I got these cute little rings for the staff team with the little engraving, which is a great gift idea. If I do say so myself. They also sent me a really cute ring with this flower on it and this beautiful necklace that has like the three muses on it, like three goddesses standing together and it's like representative of a lot of different cultures that have like three goddesses. I just really, it's very Greek culture nerd. I loved it. It's beautiful. I've gotten a lot of compliments on it.

Sophie: Gldn is a female owned company. Hi Ladies. That shares their profits with causes that empower women around the world. They donate profits to projects dedicated to defending rights and freedoms, promoting mental emotional wellness and healing of trauma. Some of their jewelry in specific goes to those places and you can see that on their site. Gldn isn't just making beautiful pieces that look good. They're doing good too. We have a discount code for \$5 off any purchase now through August 4th just enter s a f at checkout, that's g l d n.com and code s a f for \$5 off your handmade, personalized, beautiful jewelry. Tired of DC or marvel heroes. How about super fit hero? All of superfit heroes. Active wear is ethically produced right here in Los Angeles, plus all other pieces are designed and tested with athletes from the whole size range. Extra small to 5XL. The leggings and tops fit snugly true to size.

Sophie: I personally wear a four x legging and a three x top and I feel secure and comfortable. You know, I'm not just wearing my set to work out. I'm also throwing a little chambray top over it to wear it to the farmer's market or run. I feel like looking like I'm a cute little athlete, I just love them and I get compliments on them all the time and I put those compliments in my pocket because these leggings have pockets whether you're buying a

muscle tee to support the LGBTQ plus community or looking for comfy and cute shorts, leggings and sport crop bras. We got you. Go to superfit, hero.com/saf or use Code Saf at checkout for 15% off your order. Like superfit hero says fitness is for everybody.

Allie: I'm here with Allie of Bissy swim. Can you talk about who you are and what you do?

Allie: So I'm Allie Ayers, I grew up in Snyder, Oklahoma. I'm a model and an entrepreneur. My most recent venture is this swimmer line Bissy swim. It's an inclusive line striving to be more inclusive and sustainable and do all the good things.

Sophie: Can you talk a little bit about like kind of that intersection of why you care about being inclusive sizing and like what made you aware of it? Like as someone who is in a body that's very hyped by society and like what you, why you're interested in this.

Allie: Yeah, it's, it's something I'm trying to be really sensitive about and, and do really well because the heart behind it is truly good. I started modeling when I was in my teens and like many models there is an eating disorder that follows that being told over and over again to be a size you're not supposed to be.

Allie: Your body doesn't want to be really affects you negatively. And so I went through that on my own scale and then start modeling for a little while when I gained my weight back to where my body wants to rest and then found out a little bit about how I was fitting in, I was in the plus size modeling category at a time. Yeah.

Sophie: Were you heavier than now.

Allie: I was heavier than I am now But I was like an eight. Yup.

Sophie: So annoying to me.

Allie: Well I was mad about it for four people that are actually, you know, in the plus size, you know, and then, and then I was being sent to like straight sized castings and I was too big and then plus these castings and I was definitely too small. And so anyway, my awareness was heightened for people that were in between there and I knew that they weren't being represented in, you know, advertising or really even in, in fashion, in the right sizing.

Allie: So it just made me aware that there is a lack of representation for diversity across the board. Did just being involved in that and then meeting wrongfully put in the plus size category. It just made me want to do this right for, for everybody across the board,

Sophie: having faced all that stuff in the modeling industry, right. It's like you're probably inundated every day with like fit is good then is the ideal. I mean that must've taken some unpacking.

Allie: My separation from that came really I encounter more all the time I was really thrown into in the, in the first bit of modeling to that thin is good. Then as good over and over

again. And I just bought it because I was younger. I was trying to get out of the small town. I was dying to go do big things. But since taking that step back that I did from the industry and coming back with this fresh mind that's actually rooted in logic and a good sense of self, it just all looks so distorted. You know, think I just try to stay aware of that. I mean, I knew stepping into a swimwear line that I wanted to cater to all these sizes. I was going to have to make sure that all this was done with a lot of care and um, that I didn't have any personal biases with it. So I don't know. I think that's something that I just, I've encountered for a long time and don't feel attacked by saying that maybe other skinny girls have been me and because I've seen it happen.

Sophie: Yeah. It's just like very rare to have someone be like, I'm starting with all the sizes and that's important to me. It's like sadly rare. But it is.

Allie: Yeah, it is. But that's what I am so excited to do here and that's why I think bissey is truly going to go somewhere else because it is so different.

Sophie: One thing that you were like, yes, of course, that I've told you is that like a lot of times it'll be like simple, simple, straight sized suits and then the plus sized suits, it's like, how is this even related? It's like, I just want the same suit as my thin friends, just like in a way that fits my body, you know? And I like that. That's what you're trying to do because that's what I personally want. Like swimsuits are hard because there's so many, they're like the ultimate push on how comfortable you are and what you're comfortable exposing and public and like what you're comfortable walking around. And I talk about body neutrality cause I'm not of the mind that like you have the little you the little we were the more positive years. Like no, it doesn't matter. You know, but it's like I just want to have the same options, you know?

Allie: And that was the initial concept from the start. You, I think you're trying to ask this just like why, why did this matter from you? Why did this matter to you from the start? And I think I was, it's hard to because it just seems so like a Duh thing to me.

Sophie: I, it does to me too. But apparently a lot of people, it's not,

Allie: obviously the fashion industry is showing us that it's not, but it's like I I any size shouldn't you get to have this like super high qualities, simple chic in style option that makes you look phenomenal at every level, every size, whatever that you are.

Sophie: You've never used the word flattering when we've talked about this. And I appreciate that because I hate that word. I think really? Yes. Because when it's used for plus size stuff, it always means how can we flatter you to make you look thinner. And especially with bathing suits, that's annoying to me as you know, cause I'm always like you're in a bathing suit. It's obvious how fat you are, but that's not what it's about

Allie: . It's not about covering, it's not these billions of ruffles and like layers to cover this stuff. It's just to make exactly what you are look as awesome as it.

Sophie: Exactly. And also it's celebrating like it's going in with the assumption that your body is good and so we want to show it off instead of like we want to highlight the problem areas, the suit and the style is what you're going for. Not like trying to look fit and trying to look thin.

Allie: Because a big part of my mission too with with all women is to disarm that piece of them that feels like they need the thing that's gonna keep them in. You know, the thing that's gonna you know, need to be nipped and tucked or whatever. Like I hope that that's a part that can be affected too because that was a big part of my growth with my body journey. Kind of choosing to love the parts that I didn't think were worthy of it.

Sophie: Okay. Y'All know what? I had to ask. Talking to so many indie fashion brands, I become so invested in just getting some transparency around the production process for plus sized clothing. So I had to ask Allie. So can you talk a little bit about the behind the scenes part of it? Like how do you go from an idea to like making this and what have been the barriers towards being ethical and inclusive and making like your own small line?

Allie: It's hard. I will start with that. And this is all been just funded by, by me and my modeling checks and my restaurant job checks. And financially this is always a challenge. But um, how that looks from the start. I mean I'm, I'm sketching these suits, then I take them to my factory and from the start of this whole thing I took them into my pattern maker and there was a lot of pushback on anything outside of my like small to large scale.

Sophie: And do you think that came from like bigotry or from like not knowing how to do it or like where do you think that came from?

Allie: So the woman that I worked with has worked with some really incredible lines that are not inclusive but are very big and um, she knows what she's doing. She makes really beautiful suits. But I think she's older and didn't want to get outside of the box that she had been in for her whole life. She also has seen what sells and what doesn't. Yeah, and I came in with this concept that I wanted to make sure because typically how things are done as you bring in a fit model one, typically one fit model and you do all of your fittings on her and then you do a few of those and move on and do your whole mass production of your line

Sophie: grading to a straight size.

Allie: And I wanted to have at least I am starting now with three fit models, so we have a smaller size, medium size, larger size so that we can reconstruct the fit on each body. She just thought that was all excessive and a waste of my money. She was, these samples are like \$300 a pop. So every time I'm doing that and then I'm doing it on two other girls and then I'm doing it like a third or fourth set.

- Allie: It's just, it's a lot of money and it's just expensive. Yeah. So I can see why people are hesitant to do that. It's just, that's what I'm trying to do is set a standard here what should be expected of everyone.
- Sophie: Yeah, it's a balance, right? Where it's like all the other interviews I've done for this too, it's like, yeah, it's hard to do it with the way the system is set up and yet you're doing it and it wasn't a question for you. Right. It's not always the individual small brands decision. It's like the way that the industry is set up. And one thing I talked to Danny about a lot was like hopefully trickle up stuff will happen where it's like people, bigger brands start seeing like, oh actually like this does sell. I'm like, people do want this.
- Allie: The questions that you're asking to your followers are just the feedback you're giving from your own perspective. The way that I can go, okay, I need this information to do this properly, or I hadn't thought about that. I didn't realize that word wasn't taken well or whatever. You know? I'm excited to see you do that and start revolutionizing from your side of things.
- Sophie: And of course, in addition to inclusivity, we also had to have a convo about sustainability. That's ethical business baby.
- Allie: From the start. I knew I wanted to hire within the u s so everything is produced and hired here. For me that means, I mean putting jobs back into the states, but also knowing what I'm knowing what I'm hiring. I can see it with my eyes really now we're moving towards some different packaging choices. Um, little things like eliminating the poly bags that we were supposed to buy standard, um, provide for our suits to be shipped. And individually, every single top, every single bottom was supposed to have a piece of plastic wrapped around it. So it's certainly a work in progress, but we're getting there.
- Sophie: Yeah, I think that's very cool. It's like anything else, like all the other people I've talked to have also underscored that it would have been much cheaper and easier to do like unethical factory production.
- Allie: Ab-So-lutely. No, it's so it would be so easy to just outsource, send it to somewhere else to keep it to the limited sizes that don't require, you know, a little extra love and, and make your money that way. But in the end, I don't think that that would actually serve me financially or certainly not morally, you know, has been said over and over again. That's the key to running a successful business or creating a product product that's really going to sell is what's not there, what's not being served. And this is it exactly,
- Sophie: I just want to be able to match with my friend Nina. Yeah. She's thin, I'm fat and I want to be able to match with her. That's it. And that kind of like encompasses like I want the same access as her. And also again, it's like, especially with swimsuits, so the conversation stays with small and mid fats. Like I think there's very few options for people who are super fat. And I also think those even very like very little, like nobody's asking them like, what did, what do you want? Yeah. You know?

Allie: Well, that's why I think that the idea that we talked about of a just a, uh, customizable, yes. Choice. Like if people get on and they don't fit in, in the sizes that I can afford to keep in stock, at least you can hire this person to have our exact design made for you. You know? And so that's something we're working on implementing now

Sophie: which is so cool because that again, that is more money. And yet that is the only way I think to be truly inclusive is to be like, well, I know that not everybody is going to fall even within these extended sizes or if there's someone who has a disability or is, is a disabled person whose body is like shaped differently than like the suits would fit. You know? And so it was very cool to be like, oh, like you're gonna create something like for my shape. But I'd never seen that for suits at all other than, Oh, you're fat. Like here's a ruffle. Fine. Or even, you know? Yeah. So I'm like very excited about us working together on this. So we will follow up with you and as we continue to progress, we'll see and I will keep everyone updated with the progress we make on your suits that are beautiful. Thank you for talking with us today. Loved it. Thank for how can people find you in the suits right now, right?

Allie: Um, Instagram is at the sea slim and at alley he airs a, l, l, l. E. E a y. E. R. S. And then you can go to Bissys website, bissyswim.com. Yeah, we're just in a gather all the data space right now. So if you are in one of those categories you feel is underserved. I just want to know what you're looking for within my realm. Within like a simple, clean, beautiful bathing suit. What do you want?

Sophie: Yeah. Great. So at her literally. Thank you Allie. Thank you. Bye. Oh, I'm literally ready to do a big fat cannon ball into a pool right now. Just kidding. I would never do that because the cannon ball is Wedgie city and I'm just here trying to lounge in my fatkini with an ice latte or something much more. My style. Well there you have it. Part two of small biz big fashion, sewn up in the bag and shipped on regular shipping. I will not pay for extra shipping ever. We solved ethical, fast fashion and I expect that every one of you listeners will start your own indie company and sell a plethora of plus sized clothing and that there will be a few swimsuit companies that sell exclusively super fat sized Bikini's. You can call them super keenis. You're welcome. Goodbye. I solved it. Woo.

Sophie: And that's our show. She's off. That was created by me, Sophie Carter Kahn and the iconic April K Quioh who is on a break this season, you know, and she said to me the other day though was

April: laying on the floor. It's about a hundred degrees.

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Nicolette: Yeah, I am sure you saw like shared some very sad fedora photos of myself. I laughed so hard