

Sophie: Here's our fake ad.

April: Today's show is brought to you by choker necklaces. Would you rather look on trend than be able to breathe? Then try a skin-tight choker necklace today. See? We're so good at this.

Sophie: If you're an advertiser and you wanna work with us, contact us at fyi@shesallfatpod.com. Thanks.

Cece Olisa: You can be plus-sized and live a life that's worth aspiring to. We're not the weird ones, we're the most of us. Plus sized women will pay for nice things. Plus sized women live aspirational lives. We're killing the game in our lives, whether it's like at our jobs, in our families, whatever. We just happen to do be doing it with a bigger body.

Speaker 1: Call your bodyposi sisters. Hush those diet culture whispers. We like your body big or small. Rolls and ripples are for all. Sit on down it's time to chat. She's all fat.

Sophie: I'm Sophie.

April: I'm April, and this is She's All Fat.

Sophie: The podcast for body positivity, radical self-love, and chill vibes only. This week we'll discuss nautical themed birdhouses, the concept of health at every size, and curvy con. Okay, April, what are we obsessed with this week? Are you ready to talk about this?

April: I want our listeners at home to know we've been waiting all day to discuss this with you. We can't wait to share this gift with you, and that gift goes by the name of Mel. Sophie, tell them who Mel is.

Sophie: Okay. So, one of my favorite things is to just read Amazon reviews. I think it's one way similar, in a weird way, to like museum items or like our relationships. It's just a weird way to look into people's lives because they tend to say a lot more in a weirdly specific way than is necessary. So when we were looking at items on Amazon for the launch party, we're making these really cool slap bracelets for you guys who are coming, and they're gonna have little 90's doo-dads on them. When I was looking-

April: We're searching for doo-dads.

Sophie: We're searching for doo-dads and we found this incredible review from this woman named Mel. I was reading the review of the Pandahall 10 pieces fruit and vegetable themed resin cabochons pack for crafting purposes and these are just little fruit and vegetable things made out of resin with a flat back so you can use them in crafting. Basically like imagine any accessory that would've cost \$30

in the American Girl magazine for your Bitty Baby house. You know what I mean?

April: This is a corner of the internet for serious crafters only, okay.

Sophie: Didn't you ever look at those things in the American Girl magazine?

April: I don't know that I ever got the magazine-

Sophie: Oh my god. I was obsessed with it. It was like my version of the child of Real Simple.

April: Oh my goodness.

Sophie: Okay. Anyways. So there's this little crafty thing. Mel said five stars. Nice product. Look really cute on my hand-made bird houses with a grocery store theme. Incredible, right? Oh my god.

April: I mean, when we first read this, our first question was just like, "Tell us more."

Sophie: Tell us more.

April: Yes.

Sophie: So we clicked on Mel's profile. She has so many reviews. Her next review; a purchase made the same day on the 10 piece miniature steamboats micro scenery landscaped options, which are also little cabochons. Five stars. Nice product. Cute pieces to decorate hand made birdhouse with a beach theme.

April: Beach theme.

Sophie: Okay. Here's the thing, Mel. How many themes do your birdhouses have? I need to know.

April: That's the beginning of the mystery, because if you continue to read on her page, which we absolutely did, she name drops at least six different types of themes for bird houses. Mel, what's going on over there? Please tell us.

Sophie: She bought a [inaudible 00:04:01] white tailed doe toy figure and said, "She's a very pretty doe. Small but perfect sized to enhance my home made bird houses." Mel, where are these bird houses? Where can I view them online? I need to see these incredible themes you're putting together.

April: Honestly, leak the bird house. Drop the link. What's good?

Sophie: Okay here's what else is great about Mel's profile though, we can just tell so much about her. Maybe this is a creepy thing about Amazon reviews, but Mel just shares so much-

April: It's honestly storytelling. Yes, she's dropping fur tchotchke's and the like, but she's also telling us about how she's like reclaiming her self-love routine.

Sophie: She recently bought a pin that has the feminist sign of a fist punching up into the woman uterus sign. It says women symbol with fist/feminist button. She commented. "Five stars. When I want to raise my fist. I don't have to do it literally." Mel.

April: Mel. Icon.

Sophie: Mel.

April: Truly feminist icon.

Sophie: Okay. She got 10 Christmas piano arrangements of carols-

April: Leak the date of the Christmas purchase Sophie.

Sophie: Listen. Okay, the Christmas purchase was made on September 14, 2017.

April: An icon, she's on it.

Sophie: She's ready.

April: She's ready to go.

Sophie: She's practicing. She says, "It's fun to play with the disc, a duet partner that is always available." Mel, where's your partner?

April: That's the thing. She's leaking just like little information. She's trying to paint us a story. This is about more than crafts. This is where Stella got her groove back, okay? Mel is finding herself.

Sophie: Okay. Ready for this? Touch of nature, mini fairy garden wooden door. "Large for crafts, but I'll make a big bird house for it." Mel.

April: Oh my god. This one gets a bird house made around it. So special. I thank her for her honesty. I thank her for her openness.

Sophie: Can't you just picture her? Okay, five pack soft casual lightweight crew cotton socks. "I like wearing cotton, love pastels. My feet perspire, and these are thin enough to wear with my snug Skechers." I can see her.

April: So to wrap it up. Mel, thank you so much for your honesty, for your openness, for letting us in in this way, for taking on this journey with you about reinvention, about feminism, self-actualization if I've ever seen it.

Sophie: Oh my god. I mean, honestly, I spent quite a while the other night googling every variation I could of Mel Etsy shop bird house, bird house nautical theme Etsy, bird house grocery store theme Pinterest. Could not find her, but maybe she's just out here making the bird houses for her own pleasure and refinement. You know what I mean?

April: To that I say, honestly, kudos.

Sophie: She's doing her own carpentry. She builds her own furniture. She did her own deck. She puts things together large and small. I aspire to be like Mel. Mel who are you. Find the pod. Hashtag find Mel.

April: Hashtag find Mel. That's where you, our listeners, come in. Do you know what I'm assuming to be a white woman in her 60's that's not here for the bullshit. Literally send her our email fyi@shesallfatpod. I am not kidding. I wanna talk to Mel. I am not kidding.

Sophie: We will not be posting a link to her profile because I don't wanna like sic people on her, but I will be posting a few choice screenshots of her reviews in the Patreon page this week, so if you'd like to see those you can go and subscribe on our Patreon page. So this week, we're obsessed with Mel. Love you Mel.

April: Love you Mel.

Sophie: Okay so we also wanted to give you a little reminder about our launch party, which is happening today.

April: Today. So this is airing September 28, with means the party is tonight, 7:00 PM, 5656 Hollywood Boulevard. I'm gonna be out there. I'm probably gonna have my shoulders out. Soph's gonna wear all her best buttons or something. It's gonna be so fun.

Sophie: It's gonna be great. We ordered like donuts that I can't eat, but they look great.

April: I'm gonna eat them.

Sophie: I'm gonna bring strawberries and I'm hopefully gonna have some coconut whipped cream to have with them, because I can eat that. We'll have lollipops and we're gonna have a bunch of cool stand up people. Yeah. It's a really cool space. Just look on our website or our Instagram or our Twitter. Honestly we've been promoting this so much, so you probably already know about it. See you there tonight, I hope.

April: See you there. Be there or be square.

Sophie: So, let's move onto our shout-out section.

April: Good for you.

Sophie: Yeah. We'd like to say a quick shout-out to our reviewers on iTunes. Just as a reminder, if you leave us a review on iTunes we're gonna say your name, your username I guess, right here on the show. So let's start out. Tkpkresident. Thank you.

April: Thank you.

Sophie: Capsoloxo.

April: Thank you.

Sophie: Thanks so much. Libbyparker. Thank you so much for your review, and izzyck, that's my sister.

April: Thank you.

Sophie: We also wanna give our Patreon members some shout-outs, so Isabelle is also a Patreon supporter, so this is a double shout-out to Isabelle, a true sister and a true friend. Thank you so much. I'd like to shout-out Isabelle's boyfriend, Tennyson, thank you so much for being a Patreon supporter. Also thank you to my mom and my dad for supporting our Patreon.

April: Choose life warrior, we are so honored by your support.

Sophie: Kirsten Larson.

April: She was actually our first non-Sophie Patreon. Our next one, Ruthie Fudge, we so appreciate you. Our final non-Sophie's relative Patreon is Aaron. Thank you so much Aaron. We are so excited to have you.

Sophie: It truly means the world to us and as we continue to grow our Patreon, we'll be able to spend more time on the podcast and creating more resources and meet-ups. We just really, really appreciate you guys. Thank you so, so much.

April: Thank you so much.

Sophie: This is also a good point to say that tomorrow, if you listen into to the Call Your Girlfriend podcast hosted by Ann Friedman and Aminatou Sow, they are featuring us.

April: We're so excited. I love that we're just saying it like it's normal. We stan Amina and Ann hardcore. We're so excited they gave us the opportunity to introduce ourselves to their audience, and of course we talked about Body Positivity and we talked about Oprah, one of my most problematic faves. So please tune in on their feed tomorrow.

Sophie: Yeah. If you're a new listener from that show, welcome. We're glad to have you. We love Anna and Amina and we're so glad you're here.

April: We should really get to The Meat of It, don't you think?

Sophie: Yeah. Let's do it.

April: The Meat of It.

Sophie: The Meat of It.

Sophie: So, we were really lucky to be invited to go to Curvy Con a couple weeks ago. Curvy Con is a multiple day event in the midst of New York fashion week, created by Cece Olisa and Chastity Garner and it is a space where we can go as fat women and femmes, and there were also some fat men there. That guy from Mean Girls, Damien from Mean Girls was there just like walking around.

April: I did freak out. I fully did.

Sophie: Curvy Con is a place for fat women to come and look at clothes and be in fashion week among each other and look at fashion shows. There were some panels about business and fashion and buyers from different plus size businesses and just like a bunch of rad fat women walking around and kind of exulting in each other's company.

April: Totally. I mean imagine Comic Con but it's just fat lady-

Sophie: Have you been to Comic Con?

April: I'm never gonna go to Comic Con. Look at me, but I've seen like a video of Comic Con. I've seen the video of Lupita at Comic ... I'll watch if Lupita's there.

Sophie: Okay.

April: Imagine it's Comic Con, but instead of stuff for nerds, it's fat ladies with fashion brands that are actually trying to cater to them, and women coming from all over the nation to meet their online friends and talk about their struggles and their triumphs and their joys together. The feeling in the air was just really unique.

Sophie: It was cool.

April: Yeah, it was buzzing with people just so excited.

Sophie: Yeah. So Cece reached out to us and invited us to come and do some recording there and we were so grateful. So we had a chance to sit down with Cece and Chastity and ask them a little bit about why they created the Curvy Con.

Cece Olisa: Hi I'm Cece Olisa. I'm co-founder of the Curvy Con and I do travel, dating and fitness from a plus-size perspective.

Chastity Garner: Hi. I'm Chastity Garner-Valentine and I'm the co-founder of the Curvy Con, but also the editor behind Garner Style.

Sophie: What does it mean to you to be able to put this together and see it come to fruition and see people be comfortable and here and living it?

Cece Olisa: So, I feel like my journey to body positivity and being a plus-sized blogger is a huge part of my identity at this point. I think growing up I did not have any plus-size friend. I was the plus-size girl in my group of friends and then I started a blog about being plus-sized and happened to meet other bloggers who then became my friends. The kind of comfort that comes in being in a space like that ... There was one time when we all went to dinner. There was like three of us and they were like, "Table for three." One of my other fat friends was like, "Actually table for four. There's a lot of us." So like having friends who are saying something like that. It's like we need room. It's a thing. It's so comfortable and comforting, but I felt like it was a luxury because I was a blogger.

Cece Olisa: So Chastity and I created the Curvy Con because we felt like there has to be ... We knew the people that followed us, like our fans. They were probably having the same experience. So even if like for a weekend, if we could create a space everybody looks like you, where if you ask someone where they got your outfit you can go get it too. Those things are so important. So if we could do it even for two days, it was really important for us.

Chastity Garner: I feel like, I don't wanna say we had a lot to prove with the Curvy Con, but there's a lot of notions about plus-sized women and what they will and won't support. Our girls, they supported us before we got sponsors. We had a closet sale. They bought our clothes. That money was used to put down on the space. They bought our tickets. They sold out our platinum tickets day one, like within a few hours.

Chastity Garner: To prove some of the market researchers wrong is a great feeling.

Sophie: Yeah.

Cece Olisa: I would say it's only in the recent past, like the recent few years, that being plus-sized felt aspirational. Not that you aspire to be plus-sized, but that you can be

plus-sized and live a life that's worth aspiring to. We're not the weird ones. We're the most of us. Plus sized women will pay for nice things. Plus sized women live aspirational lives. We're killing the game in our lives, whether it's like at our jobs, in our families, whatever. We just happen to do be doing it with a bigger body.

April: So the first day of Curvy Con, well it started with an exercise class, which me and Sophie we're like-

Sophie: We did not attend.

April: "No thank you." We watched the live stream and it was just women doing hardcore circuit training.

Sophie: Well, you were sick.

April: Oh yeah. That's true. That day did in fact happen.

Sophie: Yeah, so we weren't gonna go to that. Women do work out, don't get it twisted.

April: So after the exercise class, later on in the afternoon, the first event was called a Sippin' Shop. We walked on. It was bumping. There was a DJ and it was like all these-

Sophie: He was a very handsome DJ, I would just like to say.

April: Yeah, he was like really hot, and he was really good. He was doing lots of interesting throwback mixes, which I appreciate. So it was all these fashion designers and brands. Labels had their own stands set up and they were selling some merch, and then just a bunch of fat women like shopping, having drinks, meeting each other. It was really loud and-

Sophie: Overwhelming a little bit.

April: It was. It was like everybody in their best looks, like so excited and ...

PART 1 OF 3 ENDS [00:16:04]

April: It was like everybody in their best looks, so excited.

Sophie: It was cool.

April: It was fun, yeah.

Sophie: That part was really cool, and then that night we got to hang out with a couple other bloggers and media creators who were there, that was fun. And there was a fashion show that day.

April: Oh yes. Okay, so the fashion show. This, I think was the most interesting event, to me, of the lineup. It was sponsored by Dia&Co, and so they have a bunch of mini brands under their umbrella that they were debuting at the fashion show, as well as some other brands that's you've already heard of. It's all these, again, plus sized women, ready to sit down. This was, by the way, during New York Fashion Week, so we're all so excited. We sit down, we're ready for the fashion show, me and Sophie were front row.

Sophie: We were paraded to the front row. We were important.

April: Yes. We had press badges. We're very cool, so we're sitting down, we're ready, the fashion show starts. Immediately who walks down is like a size 6 model. And I started laughing when I saw the first one, I was like, "You've got to be kidding me." And it was jut model after model, size 4, and size 6, size 10. During the show the most interesting thing to me, was that when an actual fat woman would come down, every once in a while they'd be like a size 18 model, maybe there was like four of them for the whole night.

April: Every time one would come down, everybody started aggressively cheering, I think led by Bree, our business manager, hey Bree. It was all this aggressive cheering, and it was almost to scold the designers, basically the fat women here are going to get applause because this is a plus size show, it should be fat models.

Sophie: It was weird to see the models walking down the runway in these clothes that were clearly meant to "flatter", meaning to hide fat bodies and have them be pinned back behind a size 12 model's ... The nape of her back.

April: They'd rather cut down the clothes to fit a thinner woman than just have a chubby girl on the runway.

Sophie: Yeah, and the next day there was a panel about plus size fashion and, again, our manager Bree stood up and was like, "Hey, how come there are no plus size models? Actually fat models." And the whole room started cheering and then they were like, "Oh, I guess that struck a nerve." And it was like, "Yeah, what are you thinking? Look at your audience. Look who's here."

April: "Look at your audience." The women, when those thing women started coming down the runway everybody was like insulted. You could see that, because we're literally at an event for fat women. By the way, we have buying power. We're here to buy these clothes, we don't know what they're going to look like because that girl's a size 4. This is ridiculous.

Sophie: Also, we'll put this in the show links, there is an article in Marie Claire by Lauren Chan, who is a plus size model, and now blogger, who was at Curvy Con, and she wrote in Marie Claire awhile ago about how plus size representation on the mainstream runways is slowly increasing, but that one of the excuses the

designers give are, "The fabric's expensive." I'm like, "Are you kidding me? Your jackets sell for like ten thousand dollars. What are you talking about?" Also, then do it on a doll size. What do you mean you're trying to save money?

April: Totally. I just think this is a hard truth that we have to face as designers, they're saying it's expensive. The reality is this is discrimination based. You just don't want fat girls in your clothes because you think fat girls are ugly. It's not that you don't think it's worth it to invest, because you know the money is there. Fat women are just like other women. We have money.

Sophie: Yeah totally.

April: It's that they don't want us wearing their labels and that was a abundantly clear right in your face right during that show. So to see people rebel and be like, "We're only cheering for the fat women. We're here to support the fat women." It really was like a little mini resistance and I was so excited by that energy. The designers were like genuinely shocked.

Sophie: Yeah, which is so weird to me. That's not CeCe and Chasity's fault per se, that's the reality of what's available for a lot of plus size companies, which is why we're so glad that companies like Premme, which is run by Nicolette Mason and Gabi Greg, which is doing fashion forwards plus sized fashion, and they sold out immediately both of their lines, they just had their second launch. We're ready for real clothes like look like other cool people's clothes.

April: Totally. The money is there, it's just about the designers being ready to do it. In a perfect world, women who are fat, women of color all together celebrating, having fun in our own Barbie Dream House and part of it did feel like that, but then it was this bubble burst moment when we realized, "Oh, we still have to deal with the realities of stereotypes and discrimination, and capitalism." Is all just hitting us in the face right at the same event.

Sophie: So, just went a while criticizing the runway show, and we also were like very pleased with the feeling of just being among other fat women and kind of the care and concern that Cece and Chastity put into the whole event. It really felt like they cared about who was there and that people were having fun and trying to make it a joyous, celebratory space, and that really came through to me.

April: Okay, just one more question. We're going to ask as many women here as we possibly can, so we'd love to ask you guys too, what is something you love about yourself?

Chastity Garner: I like that I'm very comfortable with who I am. I feel like if you're around me, even when other women aren't comfortable with themselves, to me it's almost second nature to be that way, and so when someone says, "Oh, you're so confident." I'm like, "Well why wouldn't I be confident?" I feel like I want that for every person that is around me. Any other woman should just be

comfortable with themselves. That doesn't mean that I love every single thing about me and there's not things that I want to improve, but as Chasity, I'm comfortable with Chastity and we should all share in that sort of comfort.

Cece Olisa: I would say that something I love about myself is that I'm open to my own journey. I moved to New York City from California to do musical theater and if you want to be an actress, there is a box that people definitely place you in. I did not fit into the big black girl box and I was constantly fighting that. It wasn't until I took a step away from acting and randomly started a blog, that I began to be open to the fact that maybe my path does not look like what this casting director, or this movie producer thinks it should look like, and maybe I should just be open to what life is bringing to me.

Cece Olisa: I think a lot of us kind of decide the way our life should look, and decide what's the right thing or the best thing and sometimes you have to be like, "Okay, if something's not working out, why?" And take a step back and see what is ... For me it's God, for you it's the universe, whatever it is. What is coming to me? What is positive about me? And for me, my personal motto is don't wait on your weight to live your best life. My best life doesn't look like being a tap dancer on Broadway like I thought it would. I looks like doing cool things like this, but I'm more fulfilled with that than I would have been, but if I wasn't open, I would have never found this space.

Gabi: I'm Gabi @gabifresh, and I am here at Curvy Con here today with my partner Nicolette Mason of Premme.us. I like my integrity, and I like my honesty. I feel like I am a perfectionist and that can definitely get in the way of things, but at the end of the day, I feel like I really am passionate about what I do, and I want to make it great.

Speaker 2: My name is Kesa Sanders, I love my legs.

Speaker 3: Hi y'all. My name is Leann Mangeno. You know what? I love my smile, which I get from my mother, but I also love my height and my shape.

Speaker 4: Zuhuar, being there for my family, and just being able to say I did well at my job.

Speaker 5: My name is Chantal, my favorite thing about myself is my personality. I'm funny to me, so that counts, and I think I help people a lot.

Sophie: So is this what we think of when we think of a fat woman's utopia?

April: Yes and no. I will say yes, because for me, we've talked a lot on the show about how specifically body positive spaces are so overwhelming white and thin. When we pulled up to Curvy Con, it was about 500 chubby black ladies in there and I was living my life.

Sophie: You were literally ... We looked inside and April was like, "They're all black."

April: I was so excited. There was a mix, there was African ladies there with their clothes and I was like, "This is lit." It was just women there to celebrate in friendship and to put on clothes and play dress up together. I wish there was a space where we could address all different aspects of fat life, essentially. We talked a little bit with our friends at Curvy Con about how we wish there were more inclusivity as far as queer. Like if there events that talked about being queer and being fat. More talk about the intersections, I think is important. Yeah.

Sophie: Also, Curvy Con can't be all things to all people for sure. It's yet another problem of there is only one.

April: Yeah.

Sophie: So it's trying to be everything to all people. You can only imagine what you can see, because for a lot of people, the narratives that you see around you are the kinds that you mirror then in your own life, and the path that you set forward for yourself, is informed by the media you consume and the spaces you believe exist for you.

Sophie: Actions items for the future; support Cece and Chastity and other fat women who are trying to create intersectional fat spaces with lots of women of color to widen the horizons for all of us. Also, don't be afraid to have some internal, intra community conversation about what is lacking in these spaces and about what we would like to see in the future, because if we don't talk about it, we can't make it happen.

April: Totally.

Sophie: I think that's The Meat of it for this week. We've solved the problem of a previously, non-existent, fat women's utopia. You're welcome.

April: You're welcome.

April: Here on, She's all Fat, while we don't believe in capitalism, we are looking to sell out.

Sophie: This week we're supported by our crystals and our sub-par dairy free milks. So if you'd like to become a beloved advertiser and support us as well, just contact us via our website. Thanks.

April: And now it's time to ask a fatty. If you want advice, you can send a voice memo of yourself asking a question to fyi@shesallfatpod.com. You can record it on your computer or the voice memo app on your iPhone. Just keep it short, about one minute max, or if you're shy, you can send us a plain old email at fyishesallfatpod.com. We might answer your question right here on the show.

Sophie: This week on Ask a Fatty, we have a very special letter from Alicia. Alicia writes, "What are your thoughts on HAES? It seems like fat people always have to justify their health, which is total BS, but do all people have some sort of moral impetus to try to be healthy? How should we value health??"

Sophie: Okay, great question. To clarify, HAES is an acronym. Health at every size, which is a movement whose purpose is to "Encourage bodily acceptance and self confidence with ones body, often by the rejection of dieting." That's from Wikipedia, which is like kind of a good definition. My understanding of HAES is that it's like you can be healthy at any size. It's kind of a rejection of the medical fat phobia that a lot of fat people have encountered when seeing doctors, where it's like every issue you have is blamed on being fat and the idea that a lot of people have that if you're fat you are inherently unhealthy.

Sophie: It's kind of saying, "Okay, you can be healthy at every size, and what are the practices that you can use to be healthy at every size?"

April: Without focusing so much on weight loss. Like the idea that you're good now, but what can we do to make you healthy? Which really, it sounds basic to me, but it really is a radical idea that, "I'm over here chubby, but also, I'm quite healthy." It's a complicated thing because you shouldn't make assumptions about anybody's health.

Sophie: Right, it is a crazy concept when you first hear of it. If you're fat, how many times you've had doctors be like, "I would love to see you lose 100 pounds." And you're like, "Okay, me too."

April: And they'll say that until-

Sophie: You become Body Positive.

April: Exactly. They'll say it like that's the prognosis.

Sophie: Or you're like, "Oh why didn't I think of that?"

April: I can't believe. I love this one, "So we're going to work on the weight, right?"

Sophie: Totally. And you're like, "I can in for a pap smear."

April: Literally an ear infection once. It's bananas. It makes it really easy, that bias, for doctors to just disregard your health and miss stuff that is super detriment to your wellbeing because they don't really want to look at you.

Sophie: Yeah.

April: I hope HAES spreads to more medical providers so that they can start treating my body like it's not a moment away from diabetes.

Sophie: So if you want to find out more about it, you can go to the website, or pick up Linda Bacon's book, Health at Every Size. Basically her premise, Linda Bacon, which is like the perfect name for someone trying to write about this. She's basically saying you can have healthy practices around eating, exercise, and body care, no matter what size you are. So it's kind of trying to separate the idea of health and weight. For example, I personally, have had a lot of health issues in the last year. None of them are caused by weight. And a couple of them weight gain or weight loss has been a side effect, but none of them are inherently caused by weight or caused by me just over eating, which is what many doctors have told me, until I found a way to self advocate and be like, "No, I need you to do a blood test and look into this."

Sophie: Which is pretty crazy that it's only because of my ability to self advocate, which means the time and money I have to do that, that I figured a lot of this stuff out, but before this it was like I'd go in, I'd be like, "My stomach hurts." And they'd be like, "You're probably eating too much sugar." And I'd be like, "I don't think so, but okay."

April: "I guess so." Yeah.

Sophie: And then they would take my blood pressure and then be surprised when it was low.

April: Yep, mm-hmm (affirmative)-.

Sophie: Which it always is, my blood pressure is always fine. And then they'd be like, "Okay, well we'll see you in six months. Hope you've lost 20 pounds." And I'd be like, "Okay." So it's cool this Health at Every Size book has a lot of stuff in it that's like, "Let's talk about intuitive eating. Let's talk about how to listen to your body. Let's talk about ways to exercise with the body that you have." A lot of fat people know they should/want to exercise. Should meaning it's good for your body to move your body no matter what size it is. Not for weight loss, just for moving it.

April: Yeah, just use it.

Sophie: But a lot of times you can feel excluded from exercise spaces if your body can't do the things that they're doing in a class or something. There is resources for that in Health at Every Size. Yeah, so we're very pro Health at Every Size.

April: Very pro. And this moral aspect of the question is really important too. Sophie and I privately talk a lot about how it's like the idea of the good fat is just his overwhelming presence, where if you're fat you're like, "But I'm sorry. I want to be good. I'm losing weight. I know it's bad that I'm fat." Where it's just kind of like, yes, I can sit here and say I personally am pretty healthy. I have asthma, which I've had all my life. But I'm pretty healthy, but also that doesn't make me a better person, I just happen to be healthy. And it's none of your business.

People say, "Fat phobia isn't real, we're just trying to shame you into bettering yourself." That's not true, and you're using demonizing tactics to make someone-

PART 2 OF 3 ENDS [00:32:04]

- April: True, and you're using demonizing tactics to make someone "change themselves", when really it's about your fat phobia. I think being healthy is great. You don't have to be healthy to be treated like a human being. It's great if people are healthy, but you never know why people aren't unhealthy, you never know their record, their history, what's going on mentally, what's going on physically, but that shouldn't dictate how you treat them.
- Sophie: It's also, yeah, health is not a moral obligation. I cannot say it enough. It's not anyone's destiny to just be working towards a final form of your body. Also, you would never say that to anyone who ... if you were going up and talking to someone with ... I mean, this is the hard part, because I don't want to compare being fat to a disability, but other marginalized ways bodies exist, you would never go up to someone and be like, "I'm just saying this to you because I care about your health. You should get out of your wheelchair." You know what I mean? Especially in the context of how many studies there have been that say that it's near impossible for fat people to lose weight and keep it off because of the mechanisms of our body, which we do not understand that well, by the way.
- Sophie: You'll hear, "It's easy, calories in, calories out." No it's not, bitch.
- April: No, it's not the same for everyone. Just think about ... I want you guys all to privately go home and Google how many people from the Biggest Loser got fat again.
- Sophie: It's all of them.
- April: Guess what? It's all of them.
- Sophie: It's 100%.
- April: Because when you lose that much weight, especially that fast, your body's like, "Are we dying? Should I start storing every calorie you eat and holding onto it because it doesn't naturally want to go back to that form?"
- April: And nothing is impossible. Obviously, you all know somebody who lost 100 pounds and won't stop bragging about it and, like, "Congratulations." But the rest of everyone else, sometimes it's not feasible for your body. And no, I don't want to spend 24 hours a day thinking about how I can lose weight. I could have fun, I could be watching Younger.

Sophie: Well, it's also, like, if you lose that weight, the way you keep it off is that you stay on an extremely low-calorie diet, which is bad for you in other ways.

April: Yeah, you need your nutrients, and those come from the calories that you have to eat.

Sophie: Yeah, it just is not true that thin equals more healthy than fat, and it's also not true that anyone owes society in general being healthy. There is also one tiny aspect of this I would like to address, which is that, again, there are a lot of healthy fat people, but as you said, there are also unhealthy fat people. Guess what? That's not your business.

April: It's not your business, and they don't owe you their health. That doesn't even make sense. What are you asking for?

Sophie: No. And just being ... if there are unhealthy fat people, that does not prove any kind of point, just the same way that unhealthy thin people, which there are of course also a lot of, it doesn't prove anything.

April: And you all know her. You know her. She only eats hot Cheetos, she only drinks Gatorade. She hasn't pooped this month.

Sophie: Or, like, someone's thin and they have a lot of allergies or whatever. You would never be like, "Oh, it's because you're thin."

April: So, to wrap it up, we are pro heys, we are pro minding your GD business, and-

Sophie: And how should we value health? I think our answer is just we should value health as a cultural ideal in terms of support. It's not a check mark for anyone, it's not something you have to measure up to. It's something that we should be using our resources to support in our community, which is, if you've paid any attention to the political healthcare debate, it's like, essentially the two sides are like, "Fuck everyone. Let me keep my own money and pay for my own doctors, and maybe we could help other people."

April: Question mark.

Sophie: We're on that side. Yeah, that's how we think we should value health.

April: Totally.

Sophie: Sorry I got angry. I think a lot about this.

April: Yeah. I mean, this affects our day-to-day, because it's not just a vague idea of, "Should fat people, regardless of their health, be treated like human beings?" It's, you encounter it every single day. Like we said, I can't go for a checkup

without the doctor being like, "Any minute from diabetes." And I'm like, "Really? Because my blood test was fine."

Sophie: Right. I mean, I also ... I read, someone posted on Facebook in the fat acceptance group I'm in again that they were really proud of themselves because they went to the doctor and pushed back on a lot of stuff. I was like, "Whoa." I read her account and it was so crazy, because I have never and would never be able to do that, I don't think. I just am like, "Okay," go cry in the car, and try another doctor.

April: Yeah, totally.

Sophie: Where it's like, she said that she went in, they wanted to draw blood and they kept making all these comments about how they had trouble finding her vein and she should really lose weight. And she said, "Actually, it seems like you don't have the tools or skills to treat your patients." And they were like, "Oh, I guess so." Then, she didn't fit in a chair and they were like, "Well, I guess you can stand here." It's like, "If you were smaller, again ... " And she was like, "Once again, it seems like you don't have the facilities to treat your patients."

April: Exactly. That's so hard. Because it's like, "Why should I have to change to fit the chair? Get a bigger chair. What's up?"

Sophie: I mean, whose ass are you measuring for this chair?

April: Truly.

Sophie: So it's like, yeah. Also, looking ahead, for my future, I'm always afraid of trying to, many years in the future, try to have kids as a fat person, because a lot of doctors will be like, "We won't even work with you until you lose weight." It's like, "This is my body. I don't know what to tell you. A lot of fat women have had babies." I just worry about getting that doctor, doctoral support.

April: Yeah, it's hard, because you think you go to the doctor just to get taken care of. I mean, they literally are caretakers. But a lot of doctors are just here to put their personal biases into your care. It's really messed up.

Sophie: Oh, totally. Yeah, thank you for that question. I think from the way you wrote it you agree with us.

April: Thank you for being as aggressive as we are. We think this is bullshit. Thanks for meeting us at our level.

Sophie: Thin people, if you're looking for ways to support your fat friends in their medical or health needs, you could just listen to them. When they talk about trying to find health things, there's a lot of shame about how you get treated by doctors, at least for me. I know I've had issues I need to go to the doctor for and

I avoided it for a long time because I was so put off and afraid by doctors telling me again and again that it was because I was fat when, spoiler, I was not. So if you could just support your friends and be like, "Hey, this is not cool." Just hearing that is very validating.

Sophie: So, shout out to our positive, like, supportive friends. If you're healthy, if you're not healthy, you're fine. It's no one's business and you don't owe anyone anything. Do whatever the fuck you want.

April: All the resources we mention in this week's Ask a Fatty will be in our show notes. Thanks again for that letter, Alicia.

Sophie: Bye.

April: Bye.

Sophie: Now, let's move on to It's Okay, You Can Ask, a segment where we ask each other questions relating to our particular experiences in this world that we might not feel comfortable asking anyone else IRL.

April: We'll find out the answers to our burning questions like, "Why do white people walk around with no shoes on?"

Sophie: Or, "What is Love and Hip Hop?" If you're wondering, yes, I am aware that this is a trap.

April: I'm so excited.

Sophie: Thank God.

April: So, Soph?

Sophie: Yeah?

April: You're white and I'm black.

Sophie: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

April: A couple of weeks back, everyone, Sophie sent me a text about polka dancing or polka night.

Sophie: Oh my God. Okay.

April: So my question is just literally, "Polka? What?"

Sophie: Okay, I don't really understand your question. Your question is, "What is the polka?"?

April: You said something to me like ... I guess my question is, "What is polka culture?" Because you said something to me like-

Sophie: Polka culture?

April: You're like, "We went to polka nights growing up," something like that.

Sophie: No, I did not.

April: Or you said, like, "Host a polka night." And I was like, "What?"

Sophie: Oh my God. Okay.

April: Then, for our video, we have our Patreon video, you put this polka song in called, like, She's Too Fat For Me and it's like, "What?" So please just tell me about the polka culture that you interact with. I don't know what this is. This is so white.

Sophie: Great. So what you're referring to is square dancing.

April: Oh, okay. And that's different than this?

Sophie: Yes.

April: Great.

Sophie: So I think a polka is a specific type of song, the same way that a waltz is or a roundelle or something. So a polka is a specific kind of song for a specific dance. It's mostly a folk dance from, I think, like, the Austro-Hungarian area. It's a jumpy kind of dance. It's one of the dances that, when white people came to the United States and created square dancing and folk dancing here, they turned into one of those. You would hear it at county fairs with a bunch of old white men with a bunch of hay bales and then there's a caller. Do you know what I caller is?

April: Not a shirt collar?

Sophie: No. For square dancing, you have ... it's like a fancier version of when you do country dancing in lines. You know in Footloose when they're dancing all in a line?

April: Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sophie: That's called line dancing. Okay?

April: But line dancing is the same as, like, Cha-Cha Slide, right?

Sophie: Sort of, yeah. Square dancing is more complicated like that, where it's like, you know how in 17th, 18th Century whatever folk dances there would be specific moves everyone knew how to do?

April: Okay.

Sophie: Okay? You'd follow all the moves in order. So that's what you see in period pieces when you see people go up and they touch hands and they step back or whatever. So square dancing is like the folk version of that. It's like the difference between what happens upstairs on the Titanic and downstairs in the Titanic. Okay?

April: Oh my God.

Sophie: Square dancing, there's a caller who stands on a bale of hay or on a box or whatever, and he tells you the instructions of what you're going to do for the song. So there's a band playing the song and it's like, "bur-dur-dur-dur-dur" or whatever. Then the caller's like, "Pick up your partner's left hand. Swing her around to your right side. Put your left foot forward now. Turn that pretty girl around," or whatever.

April: So there's no lyrics? It's just literally instructions?

Sophie: I mean, the band is doing the lyrics, but the caller tells you how to participate in the song. My grandma met my grandpa in northern California because he was a caller. He grew up in Texas and then he came west because of the Dust Bowl and then he was a caller at this church dance that was square dancing and she was there and they met. So that's why I know about square dancing. We have a lot of my grandpa's square dancing records. Did I explain this at all?

April: No. I get it. I mean, it's like I'm learning about a new planet. So what square dances do you know how to do?

Sophie: Oh, none. I mean, I've never done them.

April: You've never done them?

Sophie: No. But I think people still go to them and still do them. It's mostly a bygone thing, I'm pretty sure.

April: I mean-

Sophie: Does that kind of make sense? Here, let me look up the definition for you. "A square dance is a dance for four couples arranged in a square, with one couple on each side facing in the middle of the square. Square dances were first documented in 16th Century England." So, yeah, so like I said.

April: It's like classic white culture?

Sophie: Yeah.

April: Dang.

Sophie: I'm sure you've seen it, like, even in Anastasia, which we have talked about this week-

April: You're always talking about Anastasia.

Sophie: I'm sorry. I love that movie. It's great.

April: I love that movie, too, but it's like your main pop-culture go-to.

Sophie: That is untrue.

April: It's literally true.

Sophie: My main pop-culture go-to is having Disney celebrities do the Disney Channel movie move with a magic wand.

April: Oh, yeah, you're right.

Sophie: But anything that you see in an old movie, like the waltz where there's couples moving and ... that's like a fancier version of a square dance, basically.

April: I see.

Sophie: I hope I get a lot of hate mail for this with people telling me what a square dance really is.

April: Please don't write in you guys, this is so ... I can't think of anything whiter. But I have to know, for all my people of color at home, white people are doing dances in the form of a square.

Sophie: All of our fans in Appalachia are going to be really mad at you for not knowing what it is.

April: Sorry, Dolly Parton. I do apologize.

Sophie: It's fine. But, you know, it's actually very charming. I think square dancing is fun. It's an easy way for people to participate in dancing. When you're white, you don't know how.

April: Yeah, I guess the step-by-step really would ... that's the key component, because otherwise you're just standing there like, "Eh, where do I put my hands?"

Sophie: In the Patreon, I'll post a picture of my grandpa's square dance notebook that we have where he wrote down different instructions he wanted to try.

April: Oh my gosh. That's so sweet.

Sophie: Yeah. Well, don't be a square.

Sophie: That's our show. Be sure to check out the show notes for links to the stuff we mentioned today, and don't forget to send us your questions via email or voice recording to FYI@ShesAllFatPod.com. Thank you so much to Cici and Chassidy for having us at Curvy Con, and thank you so much to all the women we interviewed. We'll put all of their names in the show notes.

April: Please make sure to leave us a review on Apple Podcast. It's sup important in making sure people find the show. If you leave us a review on Apple Podcast, we'll give you a shout out on the pod next week.

Sophie: She's All Fat is created, produced and hosted by us, Sophie Carter-Kahn and April K. Quioh. We are an independent production. If you'd like to support the work we do, you can join our Patreon by visiting Patreon.com/ShesAllFatPod. When you pledge to be a supporter, you'll get all sorts of goodies and extra content. This week we're posting more information, resources and readings about fashion, movies and square dancing, just for our Patreon supporters.

April: Our music was composed and produced by Carolyn Pennypacker Riggs. Our website was designed by Jessee Fish and our logo was by Britt Scott. This episode was mixed and edited by Victor D. Jackson. Our Facebook, Instagram and Twitter handles are @ShesAllFatPod.

Sophie: Bye.

April: Bye.

April: We'll find out the answers to our burning questions like, "Why do white people walk around with no shoes on?"

Sophie: You did not just say that. Okay. You take off shoes in your house.

April: Yeah, in the house. Sometimes I'll be at the grocery store and someone will have no shoes on.

PART 3 OF 3 ENDS [00:46:17]

