

# **Healing Toxic Relationship with Body**

**Guest: Tiana Dodson** 

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# [00:00:09] Jaï Bristow

Hello, and welcome back to this conference. My name is Jaï Bristow, and I'm one of your hosts. Today I am very pleased to be welcoming Tiana Dodson. Welcome, Tiana.

#### **Tiana Dodson**

I am so happy to be here, and thanks for inviting me.

## Jaï Bristow

It's great to have you back. You're a Body Liberation Facilitator. I'm curious, your work focusing on the body, why is that important when we're talking about healing toxic relationships?

## **Tiana Dodson**

This is a really good question. I think the benefit of this question is that everybody is asking this question, and here's my answer. The relationship you have with your body affects everything in your life, and everything in your life affects the relationship you have with your body. There are people who will challenge me on that, they will say things like, no, I'm fine, it doesn't matter how I feel about my body, I can still go and do the things that I want to do.

And that may be true. But imagine how much easier these things would be. Imagine how much more confident, how much more comfortable, how much more in your power you would be, if you didn't have to worry about the fact that maybe, you don't look the quote-unquote right way, or you don't have the quote-unquote right size, or skin color, or your hair is a little bit different than people might be expecting. If you didn't have to worry about your physical appearance, about the space that you're taking up every minute of every day. Imagine how much more abundance you would have in your life for confidence, for clarity, for pleasure, for joy.

This is exactly why we need to be focusing on our relationship with our bodies, because it's also our primary relationship. It doesn't matter who you are, where you are, what you're doing, your body is right there with you. And matter of fact, your body was there before you were. So when you were in your gestational parents womb, growing and developing and becoming a person, a being, a physical entity, your body was there before your consciousness dropped into it. That is

the relationship that began from the absolute beginning, and it will be with you until the absolute end.

# [00:02:58] Jaï Bristow

I think that's really beautiful, because you're right we all have bodies, the one thing that everyone watching this conference has in common is that we all have bodies. Unless people have some magic skills that I don't know about. Not only do we all have bodies, and our bodies are there for every relationship we have, but we all have relationship with our bodies. We all have thoughts about our bodies, we all have feelings about our bodies. And for some people, maybe that takes up more time than others, but I don't know many people who don't at some point look in a mirror.

We often start the day brushing our teeth looking in the mirror. And regardless of what our gender is, what our assigned gender or sex is, what our size, our ethnicity, you talked about hair, all those things can be unique to the person. But there is very much a cultural conditioning around how we should look based on those things. I'm wondering if we could talk a bit more about that, about these toxic ideals that we have, or toxic ideas that we have about how we should look like, and what our body, how our body should be. Then we can talk a bit about the reality, and how to go from these toxic ideals into embracing more of a wholesome relationship with the body.

#### **Tiana Dodson**

Absolutely. This is a hard one because it depends on your culture, your positionality, of all types and kinds of things. Of what is, quote-unquote ideal. So what I'm going to speak to is the global Northwestern culture of idealized bodies. The thing is that in this culture, which actually is pervasive around the world, because of media and such, the thinner you are, the lighter skinned you are. There's proportionality in the face that makes you, quote-unquote attractive. How you move, the shape of your body, all of these things matter and create a cultural cachet. There's a cultural currency, this is pretty privilege, that you are attractive.

Because you're attractive, people want to be around you. They want to be with you. They want your presence, you're welcome pretty much everywhere you go. And the further you differ, the further you are, like your actual physical reality, what your body is and how it is perceived. The further you are away from that ideal, the less welcome you are. The more difficult it is for you to be in these spaces, for you to feel comfortable in these spaces, for you to feel accepted, and be comfortable and accepted in these spaces.

And that creates trauma in reality. That's basically the kernel of truth that most people are dancing around, but not really talking about. It's not just, oh, I can't go there because I'm too large, or I'm too dark, or I'm too masculine or feminine, or whatever. These things, yes, it is that. But then you internalize that, it gives you messages because it's not just that one thing. It's not just, oh, that place isn't for me. That ripples back and touches on the different traumas that you have encountered over your lifetime that you're carrying in your body, because the body keeps... Oh, God, the body keeps the score. I have a fraught relationship with that book.

However, it is correct in that way, you carry your trauma in your body. You may have mentally found ways to not be in that trauma every moment of every day, but your body is always holding on to it in some way, shape or form. When you are not accepted in a place, or a space, or with a certain type and kind of people, that ripples back and it tickles that trauma that you've already experienced.

## [00:08:03]

It's really important that we find ways, and I won't say heal that trauma, that's, for some people, really outside of their real possibility because of the depth of their trauma, and the complexity of it. There's no judgment around, I have no judgment around that, it is what it is. However, we need to be able to find ways to create resilience for ourselves, and within ourselves, through finding an acceptance and a partnership with the body that we have, so that we can go out into the world and live our best lives.

#### Jaï Bristow

I think it's really interesting in what you're sharing, because I hear a few different threads. First of all, there's what our body looks like, and whether that adheres or not to socio-norms or socio-ideals. You talked about the thinner you are, the lighter skinned you are, and I think that's true when you're someone who's not thin and not light skinned. But actually when you're on the other end of the spectrum, if you're very thin or very light skinned, then actually you're being told that that's not good enough either, and that you're not healthy, you have to put on more weight, you have to tan, or you have a medical condition, or whatever it is.

We see how they're very arbitrary, and like you also mentioned, different cultures, different context for these ideals. I think that's one big piece, and I think that can lead, as you were saying, to lots of trauma, lots of toxicity, lots of pain, lots of suffering around the way we look, and the way we feel like we should look. Those shoulds of how those ideals tend to not only be different culture to culture, and people to people, and country to country, but also tend to be impossible.

There's standards that often even the models that are advertising them have been photoshopped, all that kind of thing. So that's one big piece which I think is really important to bring in when we're talking about toxic relationships. Noticing that toxic relationship with beauty ideals and with feeling like we should look a certain way, rather than and often that being impossible.

Then there's also this other really important piece you were talking about and bringing it in. Which is how we feel in our body, how our body holds a lot of trauma. I get to interview some incredible somatic therapists on this conference and other conferences, and really have learned a lot about how healing it can be, or how our body holds the trauma, but also how healing it can be, to do body work right in different ways. I think that that's super important. That's like what's in the body, the tension, the feeling in the body. I know, for example, some people who work with massage to release trauma knots, and have emotional releases and stuff, and it's very powerful work, and this brings it all together in some ways.

What I heard you talking about was how we feel in our body. Or maybe this bit we can go more into, which is slightly different to the other. It's how we feel, both about how we look, how we feel about the experiences we've had. I think that's the part that actually we can heal. That's the part that we can, through practices and other things, that's the part that we have, I wouldn't say control over, but that's the part that we can journey towards.

Because ultimately we look the way we look, and we can make adjustments, we can make changes, we can cut our hair, we can have surgeries. There's ways, but there's only so much we can do because ultimately our body is fixed, and is going to keep aging, and changing, and growing, and we're prone to accidents, and things that have an impact and scarring, and things

that we can't control. And then again the trauma, that's something that's like life experience that gets held and frozen in our bodies, in different tensions and ways, and can then exhibit as physical symptoms, and ailments, and illnesses, and that kind of thing. We don't have so much control about that.

## [00:12:17]

But our actual relationship about our body, how we feel, just being alive in this flesh suit that we all have, that's something that we can work on. That's something, in the same way that we can heal and change our relationships with other individuals, or our relationship with life, with food, with therapy, with all kinds of things we can also work on. I think it's so important, I'm so glad you're here talking about this. Talking about changing our relationship to ourselves, to our bodies, to our vessels.

#### **Tiana Dodson**

That's right. To call back to the thing that I said at the top which is everything in our life affects our body image, and our body image affects everything in our life. When you feel good here, on the inside, not even feel good, but when you feel like this is mine and it's fine, at the very baseline it's fine. I don't hate it, I don't love it, it's fine, we're fine here. It makes it easier to move throughout the world because regardless of how the world perceives you, you start with a nice solid center of, I am fine, this is fine.

And that changes fundamentally how you move through the world, and how the world actually will come and impact you. When you're starting from a place of like oh God, I hate this, everything is wrong with me. I hate the way I look, I hate the way I feel. I wish this was different, I wish I could change this. When this is the place that you're starting, it's easy to be rocked, and swayed, and impacted negatively by the world that wants to do that to you, frankly, because it's lucrative. It's lucrative.

If you can get to that place where you can find partnership with your body, where you can say that's the baseline, we just want to be in a place where, we don't hate this anymore. Where we're just like, this is my body and it is point, it's fine, we're here. This is cool, it's fine. If you can get to that place where you can listen to what your body needs, you can respond to those needs, you can take care of yourself simply, just so you can make it to tomorrow, that's a great place to be.

If you can start there and then work toward, maybe I like it, maybe it's more than okay, maybe it feels kind of good, and eventually maybe you might fall in love, but we don't have to. We don't have to. But fundamentally, being able to roll out of bed in the morning, and not just aghhh, completely changes the trajectory of everything in your life.

#### Jaï Bristow

That's really important to have that relationship with yourself, where it's not, like it has to be either hate or love. That it can be this fundamental okayness and groundedness in oneself, and this is who I am, and this is how I move through the world. Sometimes we do have love for our bodies, and we do feel even more abundance of looking at ourselves, or feeling into ourselves, doing practices. I do a lot of mindfulness meditative type practices where I'm coming in and sensing practices. There's some days I feel icky and some days I feel really at peace in my body. And this is even with all the chronic illness, and of course that will impact things. If I'm having a high pain day,

it's going to be harder to feel comfortable in my body than if I'm having a low pain day. It's the same with the physicality.

# [00:16:19]

I want to be clear when I was mentioning the three different areas that you brought in, they're not completely distinct, and they play on each other. So same thing, some days I'll look in the mirror and I'll hate everything, some days I'll look in the mirror and I'll be like, yeah, I love what I'm seeing. And some days I look in the mirror and it's just like, okay. And it's the same with how I'm feeling, what I'm seeing.

The other element, the trauma element, or the somatic element. Sometimes, we talked about pain, but there's other things, there's discomfort. Sometimes we feel like our heart's racing and we feel really anxious, that's something that's felt in the body. All these different elements, these different emotions. Love, how do you know you're in love? It's not something that's happening over here, it's something you feel in yourself.

All the different elements that we're talking about on this conference is happening right here, right now, in ourselves. We know they're happening because we feel them in our bodies. I think it's so important, like you were saying, how much more abundance, how much more capacity there is to move through the world when we're feeling more at ease, and spacious in our bodies. And whether that's loving things, or just feeling that sense of okayness.

I'd love us to talk about practices of how we can get there. The other thing I wanted to ask you about is, and you've touched upon this already but I'm wondering if we could go into it a bit more, how it can impact our relationships? How getting to this point of freedom within ourselves, within our bodies specifically, can impact our relationships and help either free ourselves from toxic cycles, and toxic patterns, and toxic relationships, and instead help cultivate healthier ones.

#### **Tiana Dodson**

This is big because most of us have either seen or heard RuPaul say the very famous, if you can't love yourself, how the hell are you going to love anybody else? I love this and disagree with this in so many ways, because fundamentally it's a message that's, learn how to love and embrace the who of yourself, the what of yourself. And then you can take that and ripple that love out into the world. Yes, I agree with this.

But the fact of the matter is that a lot of us who don't already have that, can't access it. We don't have that love for ourselves. We don't have that appreciation of ourselves. We can't see ourselves and our physical bodies in positive lights for lots of different reasons. And I'm not going to judge or shame any of them. However, that doesn't preclude the fact that you can't go and love someone else, or care about someone else, or appreciate someone else. I think both things can be true at the same time. You can have a hard time here in yourself and your body, but still be able to be loving, and caring, and appreciative of other people, and other bodies.

I hear this a lot in my work with people who come to me. They'll say, hey, I see you talking about liberating myself and my relationship with my body. I see other people who are larger than me, or darker than me, or different than me in other ways. I really can see their beauty, and I can appreciate them and their bodies, but then I can't do it for myself. So if we think about what RuPaul is saying, then we're saying, oh, that can't be true. And I don't think that's true at all.

#### [00:20:22]

We can love externally without loving internally. However, if we can take that love that we have, that we have externalized, and find ways to apply it to ourselves, to the things that we share, with what we can appreciate, that's one practice, that's one way that loving others can help us learn to love ourselves.

Another thing is that by being loved by others, by being appreciated by others, we have an opportunity to see ourselves through their eyes, through their words, through their actions, and their care of us. Because, oh, if you can see me as beautiful, if you can see me as worthy of care, then maybe I am, maybe. And that can give you a kernel of hope to start building upon, to start putting together that resilience, and that partnership building with your body. So, thank you, RuPaul. But there's more to it.

That's the thing, when you have a negative relationship with your body, you don't feel worthy, you don't feel lovable, you don't feel valuable. You're more likely to not have boundaries. Or if you do have boundaries, you are more likely to allow others to trespass them. Because sure, you can treat me that badly, it's fine, you're right, because I suck. You're right, I'm too fat, you're right, I'm too ugly, I'm too feminine, I'm too masculine, whatever, you're right, it's fine. I deserve that. And none of that's true.

Maybe you're not masculine enough, or feminine enough, or whatever. All of these enoughs, quote-unquote, all of these gates that are being kept by folks are made up. Someone decided and then convinced other people that, yes, this is true. Truth and fact are not the same.

#### Jaï Bristow

Exactly.

#### Tiana Dodson

They are not the same. Just because it's true doesn't make it a fact. So the thing is that, if we can come to a place where we can respect our bodies, where we can say, no, this body is okay, it is deserving of having good things.

If that's too much for you, that's okay. It's deserving of having, it is deserving of being listened to, it is deserving of taking my medication on time, it is deserving of food, it is deserving of rest, it is deserving of softness, it is deserving of beauty, and joy, and care. If you can just do that, it doesn't matter.

Does it need great things, good things? No, we don't need that. Is it deserving of getting its belly full? If that's where you are, if you can say that, yes, this is true for me, this is fact for me, then you are less likely to have someone treat you badly in that way. If I can say, yes, I deserve to be fed, and somebody goes, Ooh, are you sure you're going to eat that? I can go, yes, I'm going to eat this because I deserve to be fed. I don't have to take your judgment, I don't deserve to be treated that way.

That's why it is super important for us to start working on coming together with our bodies. Not just staying up here in our heads, but coming together with our bodies. There's so much wisdom

here inside of you. Your body has been holding on to all of your life. And there's so much beauty and so much abundance to access there. But at the very bare minimum, you are able to better have a boundary and say, no, I am deserving of care. I am deserving of life. When you can be okay here in this body.

#### [00:25:22] Jaï Bristow

Beautiful. I'm really touched by, how noticing in what you're sharing, how intrinsically linked in our society our bodies are with value, and what our bodies look like with value. The idea that if you don't look a certain way, then you're somehow undeserving. If you are big, or fat, or whatever it is, then you somehow have less value than someone who has the ideal body shape, just the right size, or whatever.

I think it's true in shapes and sizes, it's true of genders, it's true of race, it's true of so many things, that inherent sense of value tied in with what you look like. So being able to start breaking those cycles in the way you said, and it can be step by step. We don't just go straight from that to, I deserve everything in the world. Some people might be able to do that, but sometimes it's just, I deserve, I deserve basic human rights, I deserve to be fed. I think in what you're sharing, it's not just based on what other people say, it's believing that ourselves. I am deserving of all these things.

That's really important. I was touched, as to what you're saying, good enough. It's like good enough for who? Like you say, it's made up. It's like, who are we trying, and I think that's always an interesting question, who are we trying to please? Who are we trying to be good enough for? Is it society at large? Is it a parental voice that we still have in our head? Is it our own judgment? Is it a partner? Is it a friend? Is it a parent who's still, not whose voice isn't just in our heads. Like all these things, it's worth looking at. Whose ideals are we trying to live up to?

I was also really touched by what you were saying about, in relationship to that love, that we quoted RuPaul here. That sense of, you can love someone and you can grow, and heal through that love for someone else, by seeing and valuing parts of them that you are unable to at the time in yourself. Through doing that, it might eventually turn around and you might be able to love those parts of yourself, or love parts of yourself as well.

And we can heal in the love of another. We can heal when, like you say, starting to see ourselves through someone else's eyes, and that real sense. I think that that's a really important thing to bring in, because it's easy to go into this thing of, I have to be the best at self-love before I can have any relationship with anyone. But the truth is, we're constantly in relationship with lots of people all the time, and that self-love is quite hard to achieve.

It's a journey, and part of that journey is allowing love where it's present. We're allowing ourselves to feel love towards other people, and allowing ourselves to feel loved by other people. And slowly that will hopefully help heal, help unfreeze some of those traumas, and until we can get to a point where we can feel that love in ourselves, and embrace it, and towards ourselves.

All these different threads, that we've been talking about today, are very interlinked. It's not saying, oh, you can't change your physical appearance, you have to love yourself exactly as you are. For myself, cutting all my hair off, which people will notice if they've seen previous conferences and might notice a slight change in name and pronouns, for example. But that was an incredibly freeing reaffirming act for me, which has helped me feel more self-love.

#### [00:29:13]

It's also not getting into the ideal that, oh, if I look this way, then I'll be happy, then I'm allowed to experience love, then I will experience love. But it's more like as we're on our journey, it's the same with food. It's not like, oh, if I can eat that perfect pizza, then I'll be happy, for example. But more like, okay, what foods do I want right now? What feels nourishing for me right now?

It's the same in life, it's like, okay, does it feel supportive to put on this dress, this shirt, this onesie, this pajama top, whatever it is, nothing at all. Does it feel supportive to put on makeup, not put on makeup? Does it feel supportive to style my hair? And it's okay to have that fluidity with our body as well. That our relationship with ourselves and with our body, just like relationships with other people are not static, are not fixed, that we will have different times. And that fluidity, that journey is part of what's fun and exciting about life. It allows creativity, right?

## **Tiana Dodson**

Absolutely, that is body liberation. Body liberation is where we can be fluid, we can be changing, and it is all perfectly okay. The thing that makes oppression oppressive is the expectation that you fit into a box. You must be this tall to ride this ride, you must be this thin to be desirable, you must be this, that and the other, to be a good partner. And when we can break out of these chains and liberate ourselves from the expectations, from the shoulds that are trying to keep us small, boxed, and easily defined, which is not human at all.

Human beings are so complex when we are able to just be human, and be fluid, and just be changing and changeable. This is liberation. You're not going to feel beautiful, and fantastic, and confident every day. I think that's a lot of what people expect, they're like, I am liberated now, everything will be good from here on out. No, number one, there is no I am liberated now. There's no, I've crossed that finish line and now I'm on the other side. It doesn't really work that way, especially while we live in a world full of oppression.

And number two, you mentioned this earlier. You're going to have a crap day, you're going to have a bad body day, you're going to have a bad mental health day. You're going to have a day where, just like everything is too hard, these things happen. The difference between those days, when you are at home in your body, and those days when you are in a negative relationship with your body, is how much further you have to go... No sorry of how much less you have to do to get to a place where you are okay.

Because when you're in partnership, you're starting up here. Even on a bad day, when you're a negative, you're down there somewhere, and you have to come all the way up. And so just makes everything easier, even on a bad day.

# Jaï Bristow

That's such an important piece you're bringing in. You know, I've been talking on this conference with Jimanekia Eborn, with Akilah Riley-Richardson, and many others, about redefining the term healing. That it's part like the chat with Akilah was all about embracing messiness. Because it's what you're saying, whether we're talking about healing, whether we're talking about liberation, whether we're talking about enlightenment, whether we're talking about any of these words, that have become these ideals. We have this, we can't help but see it as, okay, here's a thing, and I'm

here, and eventually I'm going to get there. And it's a journey, which means I might have to go like this to get there, but eventually I'm going to get there, and then everything will be fixed, everything will be fine.

# [00:33:26]

Whether that's to do with our relationship with our body, with relationships in general, with life, with happiness, there's this again, all these ideals. It's the same thing of, if I look this way then I'll be happy. If I can have that house then I'll be happy. If I can do all my spiritual practices and heal all my trauma then I'll be happy. Or whatever it is, then I'll be liberated, then I'll be free.

It's not so much about getting to that point, as so much integrating those values into where we're at now. Finding moments of liberation in our relationship with our body right here, right now, however it's feeling. Finding moments of healing when we wake up, and every day, in every moment remembering to bring in these different elements of connecting to ourselves, accepting ourselves, loving ourselves as much as we can. And if we can't, trying to find that in another, or noticing what we love about someone else that is also reflected in ourselves.

This is another reason why representation matters so much, because it's a really helpful way to normalize in society, different bodies, different colors, different sizes, different genders, different. And to feel like, oh, if other people can see them that way, and if I can see them in that way, then maybe one day other people and I can see myself that way too, for example.

Tiana, this has been great. I'm wondering, we've touched upon a few different things around liberation and practices. I'm wondering if you want to bring in any more specific useful practices, or practical things people can do, to do what we're talking about, bringing in those moments of liberation, of freedom, of healing into the everyday, rather than seeing it as a threshold to get to.

# **Tiana Dodson**

I'm going to answer it in a long way, because I do that. I have a four step framework for body liberation. And the first step is education, because you cannot fight against a system you neither know nor understand.

Step two is reframing. And we talked on that a little bit earlier, where you question the voices in your head, you question the stories that you have about yourself that people have told about you. You look at them for actual truth, actual fact. And you get rid of the ones that are not helping you, and then the ones that you can rework, reframe, change to be more supportive of your journey moving forward. You do that in that step.

Step three is about self-care and resilience building, because regardless of how much work you have done for yourself, the world hasn't changed that much, unfortunately. So you have to learn how to both go out into the world and be who you are. Practice, make these choices continually to be yourself, but also be able to take care of yourself, and heal the harms that are caused by just being in an oppressive world. And you do that also by finding your community, and learning how to be in relationship with other people who are doing the same kinds and types of work.

And then step four is advocacy, where you start learning how to ask to get your needs met. In addition, every time you advocate for yourself, or for someone else, you're creating a ripple effect that makes this system, and this situation easier for people who are on the same journey.

## [00:37:12]

And so, yes, it's not linear. You don't start at step one and go to step four. It doesn't work that way, necessarily. Sometimes you start at step three and then go back to one. Whatever, it's iterative, it's circular, it's ever changing and always evolving. And sometimes you go backwards, and it happens and it is what it is.

But if you're listening to us today, or watching this video and you're like, okay, thank you for telling me this lovely framework, what do I do? One of the more accessible things is a practice that I have, that I do with clients who are really stuck in a place where, I just can't, there is nothing, I don't like anything at all with myself, about myself, no, I'm all no. I challenge them to make a Like List.

This Like List is really simple. That doesn't make it easy, but it makes it simple. What I want you to do is take a piece of paper and write down three things that you like about yourself. Just three, and they don't have to be big, sweeping things, like, I love my creativity. It doesn't have to be that, it can be super simple. It can be something teeny, tiny.

I do want you to try to focus on your physical stuff, for example, it could be something very simple and very tiny like, I like the curve of my fingernail on my pointer finger of my right finger. It can be that granular. There's this nice feeling I get when I move my arm like this, it's nice, I love it. Or just tiny little things, this spot on my face when I'm on a zoom call, I like seeing it makes me happy, little teeny things like that. Start there, see how it feels, and see if you can do it again tomorrow, the next day, next week. And if you start to feel like, oh, this is getting easier, go a little bit bigger.

Just try, there's no failure, there's no really wrong way to do it. There's also no right way to do it. It's just a practice and see if you can access it.

# Jaï Bristow

I love the framework you gave about education, reframing, resilience, and advocacy, because I see how I've gone through that journey myself without realizing that was a framework. I love how you said it's not linear. I'm often going back to point three for a bit, okay, and then point two, and then point four, and then point one. I think it's beautiful to have that explicit framework to help guide people.

I love this list that you're offering people, because it's a very accessible, immediate thing that people can do. It reminds me a bit of gratitude lists but about our bodies, what we like, what may be something we're grateful for about our bodies. I think that's a really beautiful starting point for people interested in your work.

How can people find out more about you and your work? And how can people work with you if they are interested in doing so?

## **Tiana Dodson**

I love it. So if you have listened and you are like, hey, I want to reach out and hang out more, then you can find me on Instagram, I'm <u>@iamtianadodson</u>. You can always check out what's coming up on my website, which is <u>tianadodson.com</u>.

# [00:41:06]

Sometime in the near future, there will be another version of my In This Body virtual conference. I'm not exactly sure yet what we're going to be talking about, but I cannot wait. They are just lovely events that are lots of fun, community building, and lots of good learning. One of the best things I've ever experienced.

If you want to work with me, I don't do so much one-on-one work, but I am open to seeing if there's a really good fit there. I do like to do a lot of group stuff, and one of the biggest group things that I do is the Fat Freedom Group Read, which is essentially a book club, except that reading is optional. Mostly it's about having the book as a crutch to give us topics for conversation, and we get really deep, and are in conversation with the text itself, but also with our lived experiences, our bodies, and what the text is bringing out for us.

So fatness, optional. You do not have to be a fat person in order to join the Fat Freedom Group Read, but you have to be someone who's open to the idea of fat freedom. Be on the lookout for those. You can find out the next upcoming Group Read by following me on Instagram, or checking out my website, and joining my newsletter list.

#### Jaï Bristow

Fantastic. Thank you so much for your time today.