

Ep 71: Disordered Eating and why a calorie isn't the same for everyone

MERYL: Hey everyone. This is your Rebel Nutritionist. Welcome back to our podcast today. I am really excited to talk with Colby Kranz the creator of living purely and Colby is I guess relatively new to the coaching world in the world of all things wellness and whatnot. So and I'm excited to be interviewing a millennial, are you technically a millennial? I think you are right? Yeah. So very excited because I think Colby's perspective on things in our conversation about.

Just her what, what her take is on, on this field and where she's coming from is gonna be pretty enlightening for all of you. So without further ado, thank you, Colby.

COLBY: Thank you for having me Meryl, its such a pleasure. I'm so excited about this conversation. This is gonna be a really good one.

So Colby tell us your story. How'd you get started? Like what, because I know this is not the only thing you're doing right now, but I know you're passionate about all of this. So, so tell us.

COLBY: So I have always been super interested in health and fitness. My whole. Definition of what that kind of looked like has changed a lot over the years.

I would say though, I first became interested in eating healthy when I was a sophomore in high school, and then I got to college and I was kind of freaking out about losing my routine. I was like, okay, I'm gonna be living in a dorm. I had a tiny fridge. And obviously, I was that freshman that would like load up on cucumbers peppers and all the healthy foods.

And I kind of felt alone in that. I didn't really have people around me that were doing this, that same thing. And I, it almost became a little obsessive at one point and its unhealthy and I kind of wanted to change that narrative. So I kind of felt like, okay, I'm, I'm super into health and fitness. I love eating healthy, but I wanna find what actually makes me feel good and what makes me happy eating.

So I created Living Purely, which is my Instagram that I share my lifestyle tips, healthy recipes, workouts, whatever it may be. And it's really changed over time from just recipes to more lifestyle based and in COVID, So in the past two years, I became certified through the school of IEN in New York. where I became a certified health coach and now I have my own clients.

So it's really fun. I enjoy coaching people and kind of hearing their similar stories or different.

MERYL: Right. Awesome. I love that.

Okay. So thank you for, for giving us your, your story. It's always so interesting and fascinating to me how people get where they are, but I want you to back up a second. So you did say that you kind of were always interested in health and fitness, whatever, and, and you got to college and I find it really interesting that you got to college and nobody else was.

Kind of doing this because I feel like we start to see this in college where either it's one extreme or the other, where we start to really see these disordered eating behaviors. Right. But talk about a little bit. So you said it became a little too obsessive. Can you shed some light on what happened?

COLBY: Definitely.

So I just remember it was freshman year. I had all of these tips and tricks that I learned throughout my years in high school that really worked for me. And I think that **that fear of losing control when I went to college I, I would hear my parents say don't gain the freshman 15 or whatever it was, really got to me.**

And so I kind of took it to the next extreme of like, okay, I'm gonna have. My breakfast, lunch, dinner, all planned out. And it was really hard for me to go off of that schedule. I would wake up super early before my 8:00 AM class go to the gym, make sure I was getting my steps in. And it, it kind of, **it got to the point where I just wasn't really living.**

I felt like I was in a body as a robot, just doing what I felt was needed to maintain that look and that feel. And that was when I remember I'd come home. I had come home over November for Thanksgiving break and my dad was like, oh my God, you lost so much weight. I think they were a little alarmed.

And that was kind of when **I realized I had to make a few changes and that I actually really was unhappy with the way that I was living** at that point. So I made a conscious effort to go kind of against my own rules that I had set for myself and not to an extreme, but like if I had said certain things like, okay, I can't eat this at that time.

I was like, no, no, no, we're gonna go back to school. And. **Listen to your body, see what you like, see what you don't like.** And that really stuck with me and really worked. And I would say it definitely took time to get to where I am now, where **I feel like I can go eat out with friends and go to restaurants and not worry about counting exactly what's in what and I think a lot of that just comes with trusting your body and knowing what it needs to properly fuel itself.**

MERYL: So that's, thank you for sharing that. I, I think there's just so many people out there who are dealing with this. So question, you said you had that pressure, you felt it when you were in high school, did you feel the pressure to be, let's say thin cuz that's what it is, right?

The pressure to be thin or look a certain way. Did you feel it before high school?

COLBY: I would say as a kid a little bit, cuz I was a little chubbier when I was, when I was growing up. But I never really noticed that until I would say middle school, high school. And **once you start losing the weight and you start getting the compliments, it kind of all, it's a domino effect and you, it's kind of like a cycle where you, you wanna keep going and you wanna, and then it gets to a point where it's not healthy.**

MERYL: So right. But, but I guess my question is, is, was there some overriding. Maybe unspoken sort of **idea that you needed to look a certain way to be accepted?**

COLBY: I would say so. Yeah, just based off of, yeah. Instagram, social media definitely felt the pressure.

MERYL: Right. And I think culturally, too, I think as young girls, right.

We get the message whether it's from, and I'm speaking for myself as well. Right? Somehow along the line, **I got a message. I should be thinner.** Right? That was the message I got, it was never directed at me. Right. But it was, it was the message I took away from whatever that experience was, is that I needed to be thinner and that **if I was thinner, I would be accepted.**

I would be in the cool group. I would be whatever fill in the blank. And, and we know now that that is a story we're living by someone else's narrative, right. That story was passed down. From generation to generation to generation. And why are we living by someone else's narrative? Right. But it takes time To really accept that.

And I think if there was one message that I can share really with parents of young girls is because **we're seeing such an influx of young girls with disordered eating behavior.** So when I say disordered eating behavior we don't have to categorically put someone. In a box and say, well, you have anorexia or you have obsessive compulsive eating disorder or binge eating disorder.

Like there's a whole gamut of disordered behaviors that I hate to label, but it really is a problem for people. Right. So I feel like this has to be discussed because more often than not people who end up in this industry. Who are working with other people who are trying to help them have overcome some level of that, because it was the message that they got definitely.

And somewhere along the way, like, I feel like we need to stop this. I just, I feel like they're, we've really gotta reach out to these parents, like for parents that are listening young girls, boys too, of course. But especially the girls with the way we're gonna get into the social media piece in a second, but.

Especially now with the prevalence of social media and the, and just the overwhelming bombardment that they get, **parents need to really pay attention to how they talk to their children, what message they are propagating,** right? What is that continued message and

that dialogue that they got, and it has to stop somewhere like **a young girl's value is not on the outside of her body.**

and you know, that **we need to be accepted for the women that we are.** And, and, and, and the attributes that we have that go beyond what our face looks like, what our bodies look like. Right. And I think that is so important. And, and I think you'd agree with that. Yeah,

COLBY: absolutely. I mean, thinking back, my mom's gonna kill me.

If she hears me talk

MERYL: mom, forgive, forgive her. like over the years,

COLBY: I just remember there was a point where like, I guess, Was trying to get, my mom really wanted me to maybe lose weight or like, I, I also wanted it too, but our house growing up, it was like, the boys had the junk food, the fruit rollups, the little bites, whatever it was.

And like, if we, if me or my sister had it, it was kind of like, you're not supposed to have those. So I would go to my friend's house and they would have all of these different treats. And I would feel like I was i a kid in a candy store. So I think it kind of, **it really goes back to balance.** So many, I have friends who grew up with Oreos and all the junk food in their cabinets that aren't even tempted by that so I really do think it's important to, again, **speak to your children and try not to focus so much on the diet mindset because it can really affect people.**

MERYL: Yes. We've gotta get out of diet culture. **We've gotta get out of diet mentality. It is Debilitating our young kids.** It really is. Yeah. So, so let's segue then into the whole social media piece, because now that's playing a huge role in all of this. And I know you and I have talked a little bit about that.

So, you know what's, what is the millennials take on social media? Right. You're living in it. You grew up with this, right? We didn't, but you know, Yeah.

COLBY: I mean, it's really tough. I find at least on my platform to find that balance of, okay, I have a following that is trying to lose weight and I wanna appeal to who I would want to look up to in this space.

And then also old me who is struggling with an eating disorder and how I would wanna talk to that person. So it's really hard finding that balance. I remember in COVID. I was like, I wanted to lose a few pounds and it wasn't supposed to be restrictive at all. But of course, if you're knocking a few calories and you're putting a calorie deficit challenge out there, you're gonna have haters.

And I remember I, I made this whole calorie deficit challenge, and a few people would messaged me and I, I got one really alarming message from someone that. Just saying you're,

you really have to be careful with what you're putting out there. And I, I took a step back and I was like, I appreciated that person saying that, but it's also important to be true to who you are and, and helping those people that do wanna lose the weight that don't have that restrict.

You know what I mean?

MERYL: Yeah. Well here's the thing there's and, and we touched on this, so I'll go back to this a little bit. **It is the conflicting information that's out there that creates this confusion**, because maybe you're doing a calorie challenge. Someone else is talking about intuitive, eating, someone else is talking about something else and, and everybody's looking and going well, what is the right answer?

And ultimately, look, I've been doing this a very long time. I can give you my perspective on that whole calorie thing. And I think those of us that have been doing it this long and have been dealing with so many. Different people, right? Thousands and thousands of, of men and women. And then going back and looking at where these sort of calorie formulas come from, I will tell you, and we grew up, I was trained, you know when I was trained in clinical dietetics, it was, we were trained on the 1500 ADA that the diabetic calorie diet and the 1800 calories and the 2200 calories, I mean, That's that was the crux of my education.

Like we would put people on these diets and I knew even then I'm like, this doesn't make sense. Like something intuitively spoke to me. I'm like these, this just doesn't work. And I think more important for me. Right. I would go on these, these diets on these I'd put myself on a 1500 or 1200 calorie and I'd end up not losing weight right now.

I know I look at my genetics and I'm like, it was all wrong. And, and we did it in the, when it was like back in the eighties, it was all about low fat, low, fat, low fat. So we were doing these 1800, 1500 calorie diets that were low fat. So all we were eating were carbohydrates.

Well, no wonder I blew up like a balloon, right? So so you wanna talk about struggle? Oh my God. Right. But, so I think **we have to put in perspective the things that, that we learn about calorie and calorie restriction**. And I will tell you, I think it creates this conundrum for people that **counting calories ultimately does not work**.

That is my. Professional opinion. It is my personal opinion. If you live in a vacuum, it's a great place to do that. Right. because basically, and, and yeah, I have yet to see anybody that lives in a vacuum because **not all calories are created equal**. And in the context in which this whole calorie model was driven, it was really just based on how many you burn, you literally burn a food, you measure how much energy that food expends, but if you're.

So that's a scientific equation, right? That you're doing in a lab. If you're a person who's eating that food and metabolically, let's say your thyroid's not working or your blood sugar's imbalanced, or you have GI issues. Well, **how you metabolize that food and break down that food is gonna be vastly different for everybody**.

So I think we have to be really careful. So, so right. Going back to you, your intentions were really good. You know, maybe taking a step back and I think that's really. Kind of highlight some of what I wanna talk about in terms of that's where really working with an expert in the nutrition field, and then a coach who can support that kind of thing is so important. And that's why I do work with coaches and I feel that there is a place for the coaching, but I do feel like if we're really giving out information, that's going to be useful for our clients.

That's gonna help them move the needle. That we stick to that, that we stick to our area of genius, right?

Where is our own moment of genius? And I think that's really what we have to go back to as when we're trying to help people like. What is real valid information? That's backed up by the science. Definitely.

COLBY: You know, what is some of that genetic testing that you do? How does that work?

MERYL: So, so when we go back to say, okay, well, how do we decide if, how do we, how do we sift through all of this conflicting information that we talked about?

Right. Do I follow the calories? Do I follow a paleo? Do I follow a keto? Right? Because that's the question that everybody, **that's the burning question. Everybody wants to know. What diet should I be on** well, and I said to you, before we got on the air in, in now with technology, where it is, **we have the ability to look inside under the hood of your, your DNA**, right?

Genetics of your own biochemistry, and be able to identify your individual blueprint, right? Your individual operating system. So that's what doing genomics, nutritional genomics, the DNA testing allows. It allows me to look under the hood and say, wow, Colby, you know what? Maybe you're holding on to this fat and you can't lose this fat because you have a lot of inflammation in your body.

And if you have a lot of inflammation, you're never, inflammation acts like a force field around your fat cells. So until you lose that inflammation, you'll never be able to lose the fat right. Or someone else who has a cardiovascular issue. Like I have heart disease, let's say they have heart disease in their family.

They don't wanna get heart disease. We can actually look at their genetics and say, you know what? Yeah, it looks like it may happen because of your genetics, but you know what, with the information we have, we can help you prevent that.

So there's a huge gift in that. Right. Same thing. When we look at things like hormonal imbalances, Look, the genetic testing will never, it's never gonna predict a disease is going to happen.

So people are afraid. They're like, oh, I don't wanna do a genetic test. Cause you're gonna tell me I'm gonna get cancer. I'm like, no, no, no, no, no. That's not what the tests do. Right. Or you're gonna tell me I'm gonna have Alzheimer's I don't wanna know. Right? Like, no, no, no, no. That's not what these tests do.

The tests just show us what direction might you be going in if you continue on the current path that you're on. Right? So if you're that person, who's not eating a really what I would call nutritionally supportive diet. Right. And, and you're starting to gain weight and you're starting to feel fatigue and your body is talking to, I always say your body whispers until it screams, right.

You're starting to feel some inflammation. You're starting to just have some indigestion or your stomach's not right. Those are all signs. that there's something off, right? So we've gotta pay attention to that. But, but what the genetics really allows us is to hone in on those things and rebalance them definitely, and and support you.

So, so I really feel like, wow **gone are the days where we have to now guess, should you be on keto?** Right. And there's a lot of people who are doing keto, who are genetically. Not really supposed to be doing it, right, not genetically in the direction of, of doing that. It's not gonna support their, their body to do the keto plan.

And, and then they wonder why all their cholesterol levels and their lipid levels are outta whack. So. I hope. I hope that answered the question.

COLBY: Yeah, no, that makes total sense. I think, a big reason behind the calorie counting challenge was because I found it to be so freeing because I was so used to eating a certain way and it kind, it introduced me to so many different foods.

That I was allowing myself to have. And I, that was what I wanted my followers to see is you really can listen to your body. And I wanted to tie in the whole intuitive eating approach as well. Cuz I thought that that was really key there.

But that brings me back to my next question. If you have a client that you do this testing on and you put them on a gluten-free diet and they're eating all the gluten-free bread in the world, all the gluten-free pizzas, how do you, is that a situation where calorie counting would.

Something you would look at or is, is it very much intuitive eating at that point?

MERYL: Well, here's the thing, I mean, and, and you brought up a good point, which has which, which the, what neither calorie counting nor intuitive eating. Is helpful in that case, because here's the thing **you're replacing one junk food for another junk food.**

Mm-hmm right. So **if you need a gluten free diet, then you need to be finding gluten free foods that are real whole foods,** because if you're now just substituting. Wheat bread that is

for gluten free bread. Well, wheat bread is not **bread in general is really not a nutritionally supportive food.**

Right. It's one of the highest things on the glycemic index bread will raise your blood sugar in three seconds. You know what I mean? Right. I mean, not technically, so, so wouldn't it be better to replace that with a bowl of overnight oats, right? Gluten-free oats that you put some chia seeds in some hemp seeds in you've got all that good fiber you put in some fruit, you put in a little bit of coconut milk or something like that.

And maybe even some seeds now. **For the same calories as two pieces, of gluten-free bread. You've gotten stuff that's got fiber, that's got nourishment,** right. So I think how we, **the conversation of calories versus nourishment, and I'm so glad you brought that up is so important** because it's not about swapping.

Calorie for calorie., **it's really about swapping the calorie for what is going to actually talk to my body.** So when we talk about genetics, we talk about foods that actually talk to our genes, that foods that turn on and off genes, and that's really, really important. So, so I always say don't substitute one junk food for another right.

Don't substitute the gluten-free pretzels for the regular pretzels, right. Pretzels. Yeah, taste good. Right. And once in a while, it's fine, but there's definitely better snacks than that. But I wanna ask you a question. So you said counting calories was very freeing. What do you mean by that? Because I find counting calories is restrictive.

COLBY: And most people would say that. But the whole point of calorie counting in this situation that I had done this challenge for was to show people that you can eat foods that you enjoy, but to pay attention. And, and that was another thing. **I wanted them to pay attention to serving sizes and how much they actually needed to feel satisfied and how much actually made them feel good.**

Because a lot of the times you fill a big plate. And if it's especially in COVID, I, my mom was cooking. Huge meals. It was, I mean, we're vegetarians, so it wasn't that big, but it was

just a lot of oil and there were, she was adding so many things to her cooking and my sister and I would wake up literally puffy.

And I, I would say like, what is in mom's cooking? she like disgusting and that was also what sparked it, but, and then I started paying attention to the oils that she was using and I was like, oh, do I really need however many tablespoons she's using of this oil? Wouldn't I rather have this over that.

It just made me look at food very differently. And especially now with ordering out and being at restaurants, it's, it's interesting to see that difference. You know what I mean?

