

A More Diverse and Inclusive Wellness Industry with Chrissy King

Julia Chebotar 00:04

Spice up your life with me Health Chef Julia, as I set out on the journey of what is healthy. In each episode, we'll explore the different meanings of healthy for some healthy means indulging in something decadent and delicious. For others. It's a mental health day and a good workout. There's more to help than just food. It's about living well, enjoying your life and having fun having you heard redheads do it best. Come with me, and we'll find out just what healthy is. Welcome to a new episode of What is Healthy? podcast where we share every hack to get healthier and more sustainable lifestyle. I'm Chef Julia and today we'll be talking to Chrissy King. It's great to have you Chrissy, thank you so much for being on.

Chrissy King 00:43

Oh, thank you so much for having me. Julie. I'm really excited to be here in chat with you today.

Julia Chebotar 00:47

I obviously fan girl you and stalk you on Instagram. But do you want to share with the audience about who you are and what you do and all the things?

Chrissy King 00:55

Sure. So yes, my name is Chrissy King. I'm a Brooklyn based writer, Speaker strength coach, a lot of the work I do is in the wellness industry, creating a more diverse and inclusive wellness industry. And I talk and write and speak a lot about body liberation as well.

Julia Chebotar 01:12

Which is extremely important to me. Because I hate diet culture. But I am a health focus chef. And I just think that eating healthy and diet culture are very different things. And I think that people can spiral very quickly. And everybody has a different take on health, and what health is for them. So the reason I started this podcast is because I wanted to interview people in all different health and wellness spaces and find out what health is to them and how they stay healthy. So that being said, What is health to you? And how do you stay healthy?

Chrissy King 01:49

Absolutely. So I love that you brought this up because again, I think that word health has so many like, we've come to like believe so many things. But what the word health means right, a lot of us associated with being a certain size or like fat loss or being a certain body type. And so I don't think of health in that way at all. There was like early on in my when I got into fitness I was very deeply into diet culture. And so I thought those same things like I need to get healthy that so that means I need to lose weight. But in actuality when I think about what healthy means for me personally now I think about how I feel, do I feel energized I feel nourished. Do I feel whole? Do I have a good relationship with food have a good relationship with exercise and movement? How is my body feeling? And I think so often right? We

get so focused on like the scale or weight loss, right. And for me, I did lose a lot of weight. And I was in a not a good place mentally, right? I had horrible relationship with food, my body image was worse than it was when I started. But I looked great on the outside, according to other people, right? But I didn't feel good at all. And so now I'm really focused on just like, yeah, how do I feel? How does my body feel? am I paying attention to what my body actually needs? Some days, my body is really desiring to go and strength train and get a heavy workout. Some days, my body is like, take a nap some days, my body's like drink more water, like feed me more. And so those are the things that I think about when I'm thinking about healthy is how am I feeling in my body.

Julia Chebotar 03:14

I love that I couldn't agree more like, I feel like when people say they want to be healthy, they go the wrong route. And they try to diet and over exercise. And that's how they get hurt. And like long term issues occur because of that.

Chrissy King 03:29

A lot of restriction too, right? When it comes to the food stuff, all of a sudden, that means I have to cut out all these things. And I have to eat that I don't like and all these things.

Julia Chebotar 03:36

And it's just a constant. It's what you end up thinking about it so much that like no meal is pleasurable or fun or exciting. Like so it has to be so meticulous.

Chrissy King 03:47

And that's so important that you brought that up. I wrote an article I don't remember who for what, but I wrote an article about food right? And that food is supposed to be pleasurable. And I think no diet culture has made us believe that that's not like a nice, like, that's not an okay thing that we have a pleasurable experience with food. And I'm like, that's so unfortunate because food is you know, although like diet culture tells like food is fuel like, yeah, I mean, technically sure. But like food is so many more so much more than that. Right? It's experiences is connection is like brings back memories a solid? Yeah,

Julia Chebotar 04:15

it's like all these Exactly. The memories. Yeah, it's

Chrissy King 04:19

all these things. Right? And so like, that's what food is. And so yeah, it should be pleasurable, like, why not?

Julia Chebotar 04:25

Exactly. But like, Yeah, but there's other tactics to go around that right, like portion control, or even just, you know, I hate using this when, but like an 8020 balance, or, you know, having a cheat day like, that's all fine, but I just think that you can have all the things that you enjoy just in moderation.

Chrissy King 04:46

Absolutely. And I think that's the thing though, like when we stopped thinking of this restrict because that's what restriction does to you, right. When you restrict your diet, then you want all the things because you've told yourself you can have them and when you really just get to back to a healthy relationship with food. And you can really tune into, like, what does my body actually want right now? What does it actually desire? Like, I don't wake up every day, I'm like, I want chocolate cake for breakfast. Like, that's just not how my body that's not what my body wants, right? And so it's when we actually can have a good relationship with food, we stop this restrictive ideas of what we can and can't eat what's Okay, what's not, okay? Our body is really intuitive, right. And so it's like this idea that if we give up this, like strict control and regimen that we're just going to go off the rails is really not true. And and I shouldn't say it's not true, because if you've been in a restriction place for a long time, there probably will be that period, right. But eventually, your body gets back to a balanced state. And you can really just be like, Oh, this is what my body wants today. And a lot of days I wake up, and I'm like, Yeah, I just need some more vegetables. I need some more greens, right? And like, that's what I go for.

Julia Chebotar 05:44

Do you have fitness goals for yourself? Like, do you set those? Like, how do you how do you do all

Chrissy King 05:49

that? I think well, so for a long time, I was really into competitive powerlifting. And so my strength training regimen, I love to compound powerlifting. I still do. However, like for me, that became so much about like, I have to get better that I was like, I didn't always love training, I just would go because it's like something I needed to do as a goal, right. So I want to be a stronger power lifter. And that really served me for a really long time. I don't compete in powerlifting anymore. And so for me now it's like, again, going back to like what feels good, right? And so some days that is I love strength training, I'm always gonna love barbell work. I go to the gym three times a week, I'm in strength train, but then a lot of days, especially if I'm busy. If I'm doing other things like I my number one rule for myself and kind of the rule, it's something that I I try to engage in every day is just walking. So even if it's like 2030 minutes, that's something that's a movement practice for me that I try to incorporate every day.

Julia Chebotar 06:37

But again, I I'm the same way I do that or a city bike, I make sure like city bike to work, right, yes,

Chrissy King 06:42

just to move a little bit. And again, it's not even just about like, Oh, I have to exercise that's not it's about movement. Because for me, movement does so many things for our mental health or emotional health. And when I'm feeling like stuck or stagnant, I'm like, Oh, I need to get out and move a little bit. I need to get out of walk, right. And so I'm always just really Cognizant to just pay attention to my body. But it is important for me, I feel better when I incorporate some type of moves. And again, if it's just biking or walking, whatever, just to like, not be so sedentary, my body feels better.

Julia Chebotar 07:11

I couldn't agree with you more like I remember for like, full lockdown, like March, April, like I had to leave the house where I was gonna get crazy. And I would go for like an hour

Chrissy King 07:21

long walk. Same I did that so much. Because Yeah, like there was no other option than like just staying in the house and sitting down all day in front of a computer. Yeah, I was like losing. So

Julia Chebotar 07:31

what would you so I know that you're a strength coach. So what does that mean? How do you How does that work? And what would you say is like the most challenging thing about that, like, getting people motivated?

Chrissy King 07:41

Yeah, so honestly, um, to be like, I only have like a handful of clients left, because I've just transitioned more into like writing and doing more consultation work. But I still have a handful of clients, I believe, for a long time. But for a long time I had that was like the majority of the thing I did was drink coach. And I think with what I typically trained and coached women, and I think is really cool, because the base of my training was like heavy lift, heavy lifting, but like powerlifting and barbell work. And so I think what was really cool is that, because I have a similar story to like, I didn't ever see myself as a strong person. I never saw myself as a person who would like be like dead lifting or squatting hundreds of pounds. And so

Julia Chebotar 08:22

you feel like a badass when you do like I

Chrissy King 08:25

would you feel like a badass when you do it right? And so that's what I love about coaching and training women and I know ever felt like it was like it was like helping women have that experience. And then they just took over from there. They're like, Oh my god, this is amazing. I love this. And so I love that because I know how transformative strength training was for me, and to be able to help other people have that realization for themselves. Because when I think of strength training, I think of like, yes, you're physically getting stronger, but it's also a mental thing, right? And you're like, wow, I'm doing something I didn't think I could do before. And so then it's like, oh, what other things have I not been doing what I probably could do, right? And so it's like the strength you gained in the gym really, for me transfers into every area of your life and so I love helping women feel like a badass in the gym because then you just feel like a badass in life.

Julia Chebotar 09:05

Yes, I love that. We're definitely gonna use that word. How would you describe your like you we've talked about it a little bit like what is healthy to you? But how would you describe your philosophy with health and fitness?

Chrissy King 09:16

Yeah, so you know, I think I am strongly staunchly anti diet culture. And so

Julia Chebotar 09:23

like if I want a burger, I'm gonna eat a burger. Yeah, I

Chrissy King 09:25

get a burger like that's just it right and again, like your body is so intuitive right? Like it's not like I don't choose to eat burger and even if you do choose the burgers every day that wouldn't be a bad thing but it's for me it's like I know when I have like not even a burger like if I have like a really heavy like Soul Food meal right like I'm really heavy meal like I enjoy it but I can't do that every night because I feel sluggish after I feel tired. I'm gonna take a nap right? You

Julia Chebotar 09:47

feel like you have a food baby?

Chrissy King 09:49

Yes, yes. That's not how I like to feel. I like to feel energized. Like my ideal situation, eat a meal and like not have energy go to things I want to do. So I couldn't choose to eat like a heavy meal every day because I wouldn't But I wouldn't feel the way I want to feel. And so I'm essentially anti diet culture. So for me, it's again, being intuitive, moving your body in ways that you enjoy. Right? For so long exercise has become like a form of punishment for ourselves.

Julia Chebotar 10:13

It's like you party too much in December. So January is when you get your

10:17

Yeah. And I'm like,

Chrissy King 10:18

No, exercise doesn't have to be a means of punishment, or even a means to manipulate your body, right? It's a way to access to feel to actually help us feel better. And so moving my body. So for anybody, right? My thing is, move your bodies in ways that feel good for you, and actually ways that you enjoy, right, like, if you hate something, how long are you going to keep doing something that you actually hate? So do something that feels good for you? Right? And when it comes to nutrition, like I know, because again, people have been so steeped in diet culture for so long, that it's really hard for people to change our narrative around food, right? So I'm always like, you know, what, how about we start with instead of taking away things from your, your diet, how do you add things like maybe you have a goal to add more vegetables, right, or add more fruits or add more protein right, and, and incorporate more. And so this idea that we have to take away things, and again, my goals was for people to move back to a more balanced relationship with exercise and movement, but and moving away from restriction and also like giving ourselves the freedom to not feel guilt and shame around food or exercise or diet, meaning that if you feel like you ate a heavy meal three days away, you feel like crap. Okay, cool. That's fine. That's that no problem. It's how can I approach my feelings with curiosity and compassion, not guilt and shame.

Julia Chebotar 11:32

I love what you said, adding instead of subtracting because it's add more vegetables to your plate and less of something else, like you're gonna feel amazing. You're gonna be less lethargic, you're probably a bit of digestion.

11:41

Yes.

Julia Chebotar 11:42

I also think that people sometimes fruit like, they don't listen to their bodies enough. And they've been in pain for a long time, like bloating and like, and people just are okay with it. But like, if you realize if you change up your diet a little bit, or kind of like, maybe switch up a green for another green, or you're like, Oh, wait, I don't look pregnant.

Chrissy King 12:03

I feel so better. Yes, I'm not bloated. I'm not cramping. I feel better. Yes, absolutely. And you're right, people have been so accustomed to just feeling uncomfortable that it's like normalized like, Oh, that's just how you feel? And are actually no, it doesn't have to be that way. Yeah.

Julia Chebotar 12:18

You're not supposed to right? Like, I'm gonna steal that line for you add and subtract. That's so good. So if someone's getting started into their, like, healthier lifestyle? How would they like what would you say? Like, let's say someone never exercised, and really wants to get involved, like, wants to do it? How would you incorporate their fitness into their lack of exercise prior?

Chrissy King 12:46

is a really good question. Because I think what happens people sometimes is that all of a sudden, they're like, Oh, I'm gonna get healthy and get fit. And then they like, have these very ambitious goals, where I'm gonna work out five days a week, for an hour a day, I'm going to like, clean out everything in my cupboards and put only whatever I could deem healthy. I'm just gonna go. And I actually think that's the worst thing you can do. Right? I think that's what's gonna set you up for failure. And so I think, especially

Julia Chebotar 13:09

because you keep thinking about the thing that you throw away.

Chrissy King 13:11

Yeah, you think of the thing you threw away, you, you, you know, you go into, like overdrive and exercise, if you haven't moved your body, like that can be really, really sore, right, you're gonna burn out really quickly, maybe injure yourself. And so I think also, this is the thing that's hard for people especially like around the new year is because you see all these people putting out these programs, like get healthy for the new year, and like, you're like, Oh, yeah, I'm going to do this thing. And I think the best thing you can really do when you want to change some of your habits are number one, just think of pay think of two to three habits that you want to change, right? And so maybe that is like a daily movement. So maybe if you I always suggest to people aren't moving their bodies at all, just start

walking every day for 1520 minutes. It doesn't have to be something super ambitious. It doesn't have to be something just start moving. Right? If you're not doing anything, of course, I love strength training. So I'm like always like, yeah, cool, like incorporate some strength training at some point. But again, that doesn't have to look like some long arduous drawn out, it can be bodyweight workouts, even like 15 minutes, three times a week, and just using body weights or things you have at home. And so I guess I'm always saying start slow and do things that are actually attainable, and achievable. Because again, when you set like three, if you set a goal to like, I'm gonna walk three times this week for 15 minutes. And that might seem small. And that might not seem like a lot. But if you do that, then you convince yourself, oh, I can actually do this, right? I can keep going.

Julia Chebotar 14:26

Right? So like on Monday, you go to weight train, you're like, Oh, I dead lifted five times. And on Wednesday, you go again, like, Oh, I did it 10 times now like, my body is stronger.

Chrissy King 14:35

Right? And so like set attainable goals, things are actually achievable. Because that's gonna build confidence, right? Like when you set these goals that are way too ambitious, and then you don't do them because they were too ambitious, then you feel like a failure. And you're like, I can never do this. It's like, no, let's start small. let's commit to something. So yeah, maybe it's just I'm going to walk three times a week. I'm going to aim to drink you know, however many three or four to five bottles of water, whatever water goal and then you know, and I want to add To leafy greens to my diet every day, like start something simple like that, and then build from there.

Julia Chebotar 15:05

Did you follow that trend in COVID? of like buying that giant water

Chrissy King 15:09

bottle? I did not.

Julia Chebotar 15:15

I'm not gonna lie, I bought it. I think it's still putting it out. It's still plastic wrapped.

Chrissy King 15:19

Okay, so you never pick it out

Julia Chebotar 15:24

your Amazon waste of money. So funny. I know that you mentioned that you are you have a handful of clients left and now you're focusing on writing and other things. Do you want to tell the audience what that stuff is? And sure where they can find it?

Chrissy King 15:40

Absolutely. So I'm over this well, not even just over the summer. I've actually been doing this for years. But I started again over the summer, I ran a series of webinars antiracism for wellness professionals, and then I did diversity inclusion for wellness professionals.

Julia Chebotar 15:56

If you want to go it's very important. Like it's true, like, majority of fitness professionals are unfortunately like,

16:01

Yeah, yes,

Chrissy King 16:02

and that's true. And also, I just think the industry as a whole like really doesn't talk about. So when I think about health and fitness, right? It's not just about exercise nutrition, that's a very small part, but your mental health, your spiritual health, your emotional health. And so I you know, when I got into fitness as a trainer and a coach, I realized and I started going to like more fitness events and like industry events, I was like, wow, for one, there's just not a lot of diversity inclusion in terms of people that are being represented in the fitness spaces. And then also, there's just a really important thing. Like, there's really important things that aren't being discussed and that affect people's relationship with health and wellness, right. And even we talk about racism, right? Like, why is it some people like why is it important talk about racism when it comes to fitness? Well, racism, and the way I think about it, racism is a public health issue, right? Because if you experience racism, you have higher rates of heart disease, higher blood pressure, higher rates of cancer, diabetes, all these things, right? So it's like, well, how are we as health and wellness professionals not be talking about something that's going to negatively impact someone's health? And, and, and and when we go into gym spaces, and we go into yoga spaces or nutrition spaces, right, like if we are not taking what, Kimberly Crenshaw has a term intersectionality right. And so that's the idea that people have varying overlapping identities and that it affects the way their their perspective, their experience in the world. And so when we're talking about fitness, we're talking about nutrition, if we're not taking into account all people's different varying identities and how that's going to affect them, we're really missing important part of people's health. And so

Julia Chebotar 17:25

especially if workout classes are very expensive,

Chrissy King 17:27

yes, workout class, accessibility is a whole big part of that, right? Like, there's so many things and even when we're talking about nutrition, and like food deserts in certain parts of the country, right? people's access to healthy food, produce, and all these things. So all of these things are like intertwined. And so for me, it's like you can't really, I don't think you can be a wellness professional without talking about all these intersections of identity. So anyways, needless to say, I've been talking and writing about this for years, but like, you know, a lot of the events of the summer like suddenly people woke up, which I'm happy, they're here now for the journey. But so I've been doing a lot of work in that. And I've been doing a lot of consultations for companies around that type of work as well. I'm working on a book right now about body liberation, which I'm really excited about. And I'm also working on writing on anti racism program for a personal training company. So yeah, that's the kind of the things I've been working on right now. And just like really excited, I'm still writing you know, I write for a variety of platforms like

shape and self and health and still writing for those platforms as well. Also, always usually about the intersections of wellness. So that's what I've been spending a lot of my time on. I

Julia Chebotar 18:31

love it. And where can people on social find you? Yes,

Chrissy King 18:33

I'm most active on Instagram and Instagram is I am Chrissy King and then my website is Christy king.com.

Julia Chebotar 18:39

So before we end this I asked everyone this and it's always like, quick on your feet kind of question. So don't worry, you can say anything. But if this is your last day on earth, what would your fate what would you go to meal be appetizer entree dessert? anywhere? Anytime? Like any place in the world? any dish?

Chrissy King 18:58

Oh my gosh, this is such a hard question. Cuz I love food so much. I know. And then you throw anywhere in the world and I'm like, oh my gosh. Okay, so if I'm having my last meal, I'm gonna probably eat it somewhere in Europe, right. So challenging. Okay, so we're gonna take a tour of Europe. Maybe it's I'm gonna have appetizers. It's just so hard. Actually. There's so many I love food so much. Okay, so I'm definitely gonna have my main course. It's going to be in Spain, probably Barcelona.

Julia Chebotar 19:32

Okay, Okay, I'm done with that.

Chrissy King 19:33

Yeah. And it's probably gonna be used like an assortment of like seafoods. And then, gosh, where am I gonna have an appetizer and dessert though? I'm probably gonna have appetizers in Paris. Okay, right.

19:48

Right, right, like

Chrissy King 19:52

and then you know what, and then we come back to NYC for dessert because there's just so many great places here. But this is a hard question because like, I can't have one more I need like a month.

Julia Chebotar 20:02

Yeah. Okay, well, I love it. I think mine I've been saying mine was. I think it was either fried artichokes or like some sort of seafood dish my appetizer. Okay entree is a chicken parm, like I just want like classic chicken parm, and dessert is an avocado, vanilla gelato, espresso.

Chrissy King 20:21

That's a good those are solid choices.

Julia Chebotar 20:25

So that's it for today. Thank you so much for being on. And everyone Remember to follow Christy King on Instagram. I am Chrissy King, and follow me It helps shift Julia and subscribe to the podcast.

Chrissy King 20:37

Thank you so much for having me today. Julia. This is such a great conversation. I really enjoyed it.

Julia Chebotar 20:41

I did too. I loved it. I'm so happy. We got to get it all finally done. Yes. I loved it.