

Redefining Health & Wellness

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Featured this episode: Shohreh Davoodi

Shohreh Davoodi: Hey y'all. I am Shohreh Davoodi, and I almost can't believe that I'm saying this, but welcome to my podcast. You are listening to episode number one of the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast, and holy shit, it feels good to say that. I have been pouring a lot of time and energy into this project over the past several months, and I'm so excited that it is finally coming to fruition.

In today's episode, I am going to talk to you about who I am, what I'm all about, my inspiration for starting this podcast, and what you can expect from this podcast, and who it is best for. You can find the show notes for this episode at shohrehdavoodi.com/1. That is shohrehdavoodi.com/1. Let's do this thing.

[music plays]

Hey y'all. Welcome to the Redefining Health & Wellness podcast. I'm your host, Shohreh Davoodi. I'm a certified intuitive eating counselor and certified personal trainer. I help people improve their relationships with exercise, food and their bodies so they can ditch diet culture for good and do what feels right for them.

Through this podcast, I want to give you the tools to redefine what health and wellness mean to you by exposing myths and misconceptions, delving into all the areas of health that often get ignored, and reminding you that health and wellness are not moral obligations. Are you ready? Let's fuck some shit up.

As I mentioned, I'm Shohreh. There are three H's in my name. It's a whole thing, but I am super excited that you're here. I guess I'll just start by telling you a little bit more about me and my background. So I am a certified personal trainer and a certified intuitive eating counselor. I work with clients both in person in Austin, Texas as well as online from anywhere in the world.

Here in Austin, I actually have my own private personal training studio. It is in my detached garage, and I have lovingly named it 'The Glitter Factory'. If you know what that is a reference to without having to look it up, then we are definitely going to be friends.

So I have been in this industry now for two and half years. Prior to that, I was an attorney. Yes. And prior to that, I got a music degree. So I have had a very interesting journey to get to the point where I am now.

And back when I first started my business, I was really more of your typical personal trainer. I was way more wrapped up in diet culture and wellness culture. I was more focused on helping my clients to lose weight and aesthetically change their bodies. I didn't yet know about things like Health At Every Size, intuitive eating, weight inclusivity, etc., and social justice definitely was not at the forefront of my business at that time.

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So a lot has changed in the two and a half years since I first started my business. I am doing work now that is in alignment with my values and who I am as a person. I love the clients that I have the privilege of working with, and I am so grateful that I get to do meaningful, fulfilling work every day of helping people improve their relationships with exercise, food, and their bodies.

Through my work, what I've really come to realize is that health and wellness look different on everybody. And not only do they look different on everybody, but they look different at different points in an individual's life.

How I would define health and wellness for myself when I was a teenager versus when I was in college or law school versus now are very, very different, and I think that's completely normal, and it's completely common. But we live in a culture where health and wellness are expected to look like one way. There are pre-approved things that we're all supposed to be doing, different depending on who you ask, of course. And that mold, not only does everybody not want to fit into it, but the vast majority of people can't fit into it.

What comes to mind for me when I think of that mold is a white, cis het individual who is thin, has visible muscle, no obvious physical health problems, and no known mental health problems. And if you fit into that mold, congratulations; you have a lot of privilege, but the vast majority of us do not.

Even I am someone who, visibly, has a lot of those privileges including that I am white passing. I am cis. I am thin with visible muscle. But also, I am neuro-diverse; I have ADHD. And I count myself as a queer individual; I'm bisexual. So even someone like me who, on the surface, appears to fit that perfect mold of stereotypical health and wellness doesn't actually fit the mold when you dig a little bit deeper.

And if that's the case, what the hell chance does anybody else, have or the majority of people have, to fit into these requirements? Because as a culture, we've really come to see health as a moral obligation. It's not something that you get to choose, currently. It's 'if you don't take care of your health and prioritize your health, then you're a bad person.'

And, frankly, that is some bullshit. It's super ableist. It ignores the fact that a lot of people don't have a choice in their physical health and their mental health, you know? To a certain extent, we get the body and the brain that we get, and it is not an option for all of us to be at peak health and wellness in our lives, and that's just the way that it is. And expecting us to be different is pointless because we can't change what we have.

Not only that, it ignores the systemic reasons why people cannot have peak health and wellness. Because when you think about it, a lot of things affect our health that are outside of our control. In fact, it's

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estimated that we maybe have about 25 percent control over our health, and the rest of it is due to other factors including genetics, yes, but also things like our ZIP code.

The ZIP code you grew up in is a huge predictor of your health, and that's because we have systemic inequalities depending on the area that you grew up in, you know? Chronic stress from being marginalized either for the color of your skin or the size of your body, etc. has a huge effect on health, and there's not a lot you can do about that because it's based on the way that other people treat you.

And then, taking it one step further, let's say that typical aspects of health and wellness are accessible to you, what if you simply choose not to prioritize those things? Why is that not okay? Why, as a society, do we look down on people who say, "You know what? I just don't really care about exercising. I just don't really care about nutrition. I have other things going on in my life that are more important to me."

That is so interesting to me that we do not like people to be autonomous beings when it comes to their own choices about their health and wellness and that we have these high expectations for what we think people should be doing. And anytime you start getting those shoulds/have-to's into the picture, you know it's not going to be pretty.

As you can tell, I find all of this stuff absolutely fascinating, and that is why I created this podcast. That is why I am here recording this right now. My goal with this podcast is really to show people that they get to define health and wellness for themselves and that it will change over the course of their lives.

I want to address a lot of the myths and misconceptions that we hear about health and wellness. I want to explore all the different things that typically contribute to health and wellness as well because, again, we usually think of health and wellness as pertaining to mostly our physical health, usually exercise and nutrition. And yes, we're definitely going to talk about those things on this podcast because those are a huge part of my work, but I also recognize how many other things affect our health whether that is our social health, our mental health, our economic health, our sexual health, our spiritual health.

I mean, there are just so many different things to explore that have a huge effect on how we feel about ourselves and how we feel in our bodies, and that's what I want to do here.

Health is messy. It is not black and white. It cannot be fit into tiny, perfect, little boxes the way that you would think by reading any article out there about health and wellness, all of the headlines, media, documentaries, whatever.

So I want to delve deeper than that. I want to talk about people's lived experiences with health and wellness because I think that is so

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important. I want to provide education for people about various aspects of their health and wellness. I want to give resources for people so they can explore this themselves and learn more about it.

If any or all of that sounds interesting to you, this is your podcast. I hope that you will stick around. I'm going to be learning right along with you because I am not an expert in all or most of these topics. The way this show is going to be structured is that on most episodes, I am going to be having an outside expert come on that I interview so that you and I can be learning together about all things health and wellness.

When there is a topic that I feel strongly about and that I can speak to, then I will definitely tackle that in solo episodes. Feel free to send me any requests that you might have, but for the most part, I want to lean on the experience and expertise of other people. In particular, I really want to amplify marginalized voices. I think it's so important that marginalized voices have a platform to speak out on, especially because I am someone who has a lot of privilege as I mentioned earlier in this episode. I think it is my job not to speak for people but instead let them speak for themselves and tell their stories here.

Thank you so much for being here and supporting this project. If you like this podcast, at any point please feel free to subscribe and leave a review with your podcast provider of choice. It will help other people who are also interested in these topics to find the podcast and get access to the valuable information that will be here.

I also love chatting with people who are enjoying my content, so feel free to screenshot on your phone, post to Instagram stories, post to social media, and I would love to talk with you about what you're liking about the podcast.

That is a wrap on episode one, and I hope to be around for a long fucking time with y'all. Thanks.