

BODY-BASED DIET:

Restore a Right Relationship with Food & Your Body.

By

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Prelude: The Coded Conversation Underneath

In this "diet" book, I am not going to tell you what to eat or how to eat. This is not a diet book in the conventional sense. That is not the kind of diet I am drawn to write about. In fact, it gives me the heebie-jeebies to even consider stepping into the diet wars of today and even yesterday. Do you remember the grapefruit diet? I do. As a kid, I wondered how a grapefruit could have so much power to grab my mother's attention in the way that it did. The food conversation has become frightening, confusing, emotional, full of conflict — endless experts arguing over what is right and wrong. When there is that much noise, it becomes hard to hear your own body at all.

So my body, my fingers instead long to type words that are a bit of a whisper underneath all that loud fixation. We are such studious birds, watching and picking at our carbs and macros from above, while never quite getting into right relationship with it all. So I want to explore words that might help us discover a different kind of diet — one of love, worth, sexuality, capacity, mystery, attachment, boundaries, slowing down, suspending meaning and embodied health. Words that support the release of emotional burdens and toxic loads placed on the body and on food. In other words, the things the body actually thrives on.

I feel sorry for bodies and for food. But perhaps that is my projection. Or maybe it's not. Food and our bodies have truly gotten neglected in our hyperfixation and over-attention. In all the noise, something quieter has been left alone in the dark for a very long time.

I wrote this book for you — the one who may or may not have your diet on point. I'm relieved you are reaching for this book. Can we stay in that moment for just a second — your hand extended, my book in it. Because I think the meeting point between reaching and holding is everything.

Are you familiar with Harry Harlow's wire monkey experiment? In the 1950s, Harlow separated infant monkeys from their mothers and gave them two surrogates. One was made of wire and held a bottle of milk. The other was made of soft cloth but offered no food. Guess which surrogate, the infants choose? The infants chose the cloth mother over and over again. Not the

wire monkey with milk. Can you sense that instinct within you as well? They reached and clung to the cloth monkey for comfort and warmth. They did not reach for food first.

This study has me question our collective actions. Why are we reaching for so many diets, supplements, foods as a society — this oral fixation of sorts at the cultural level — while remaining quite unaware of the deeper, non-food dietary needs of the body? Why is this not getting the same kind of attention, given it's strong link to health and wellness, as the diets of today?

So this book is for your body. The whole of it. Including the parts that no diet has ever reached. Love before milk. Warmth before nourishment. Scholars such as Donald Winnicott suggests that creativity even comes before food. So, the infant monkey wasn't confused or broken. They were perfectly, heartbreakingly clear about what they needed most. And most importantly, they knew that milk and love were not the same.

I think about this experiment often. When I'm sitting down to a meal myself or when I'm with a client who is desperate for answers. Because so many of us spend years reaching for food, or for answers — one diet or another. Could that be us projecting the cloth monkey onto food and diets, reaching and clinging. Remaining faithful, never questioning. Taking what is offered, what is available, what at least has something. While the deeper hunger goes unnoticed and unmet.

This faithful loop of reaching for what the milk cannot give. I know that place. I couldn't write this deeply without knowing it well, of replacing love for diets or food. And I am not someone who is weak or broken or lacks willpower. Instead, the body will always reach for love first. And when love is hard or cold or absent, when culture conditions us to believe that the priority is food and diets, these things begin to take the place of the original needs of the body. Over and over. In an endless, exhausting loop.

But there is a way out. There is a somewhere in you that flies under the radar of most conversations about food and body. It is influencing everything — what you reach for, what you avoid, what you call hunger, what you call control. We don't talk about it. Instead we admire the discipline. We build billion dollar industries around it. We give it awards and before-and-after

photographs and its own section in every bookstore. And the body keeps reaching for what the discipline cannot give.

I know what deadness feels like in a body. It has taken me a long time to know what aliveness feels like. Deadness — which the food and diet industry promises to fix, but cannot — feels stark, dried up, suffocating. The opposite of luscious. There is no Instagram filter for prune-like deadness. And I know what it is to project onto food everything that deadness withheld — juice, warmth, response, aliveness. To make food luscious because something else was not. Only to then end my healthy, and alive meal with profound and unexplainable grief and sadness.

So, this book is a bit of a coded conversation. While the title suggests, *Body-Based Diet*, it's not the kind of diet our culture — the one that earns billions off food and diet-related content — wants written. But it is a conversation that needs mention, written for two readers, who don't know they are in the same story.

The first is the one who thinks her relationship with food is fine — controlled, clean, handled. She is not desperate. She looks, from the outside, like she has it together. She doesn't think she needs this book. She may be right that there is nothing to find in the direction I am pointing. But what she will find, if she goes there, is a world that has been left alone for a very long time. Stark. Dried up. Void of nourishment. An extremely neglected world. The most neglected world. The one that has no Instagram filter.

The second reader is the one who thinks she needs fixing. She is identified with being the broken one — too much, too hungry, too out of control. She has been told, in a thousand ways, to get her shit together. She doesn't know she has been carrying something that was never only hers. She also thinks there may be nothing to find in the direction I am pointing — because the emptiness inside has always felt like her fault, her failure, her deficit.

Both readers are right that what I am offering is not comfortable. Both are right that the territory is unfamiliar. Both may find, in different ways, that what lives in that neglected world disturbs them.

What if fifty percent of the diet conversation is right — and the other fifty percent of the dialectic has never been given its voice? This book is that other fifty percent. It will not tell you what to eat.

What if we go together, into the places you may think are a waste of time. The places that seem boring at first, like there is nothing to discover. Somewhere beyond the stimuli and Instagram posts of perfect bodies.

There may not be anything to discover. But there may also be something — not the aliveness you've been chasing from the outside, but something quieter. Something that has been waiting to be set in motion within you.

A hunger you didn't know you had. A body you didn't know was waiting. And a reach for something more real.

My fingers are reaching toward yours. Will you meet me there — in the space between — rather than reach again for what has never quite been enough?

Chapter 1: The Body's Native Language and Diet

This chapter is about one of the body's most primary non-food nutritional needs: the need for contact. For a human whose heart beats, who looks back, who reaches toward you.

My left index finger is moving across the F key on the keyboard. Slowly. Feeling the bump.

That bump is a threshold. A portal into a world that has nothing — absolutely nothing — to do with food or diet. A world I have not been allowed to enter. A world that, if entered, might crack something open that has been sealed for a very long time.

I am afraid. And I am sad.

Because what my hands really want to reach for has never been food. It has been you. Contact. A human whose heart beats. Someone who looks back. Someone who wants to play peek a boo. Someone who reaches toward me the way I have been reaching my whole life.

But you are so confident in your study of food and diets. And I have felt, at times, like I am talking to a wall. A non-relational wall. Sufficient unto itself. Needing nothing I have to offer.

And so I close my mouth and its asking for love. And I reach for food instead. Maybe it's enough. Or so I want to convince myself of that.

I am asking my finger now to slow down that reach, to linger there in the encounter. To let an experience move me. To stay with the bump on the F key. To feel the gateway rather than rush past it. And as I slow down, sadness comes. A world of nothing. Of no contact. Of being forced to inhabit a world that makes no sense to me, that asks me to want what I do not want, to share what I cannot share.

My mouth is closed. It's not speaking. But my fingers are. They know the way.

They are speaking of a world of restoration of what is real and alive that lives beyond food. A world of contact, softness, looking, smiles, protection, play, nurture, relationship. The diet of the body. The things that, when they are absent, denied, shamed or exploited, can send us reaching for the next closest thing.

This is the world this diet book is trying to enter. Together, you and I.

It's a field beyond right or wrong, as Rumi offers. A world beyond what you should or should not eat, or how your body should or should not look. A world beyond measurements, meaning and matter. It's a reality that sits in the in-between spaces. It may be hard to hold directly, because of its uncertainty and soft edges. But it invites a deeper, richer encounter to emerge. Like a peek-a-boo game, this is the body's native language and diet.

Chapter 2: The Shoreline

This chapter is about one of the body's most neglected non-food nutritional needs: the need for the generative and imaginal. For play, creativity, and the in-between space where aliveness grows.

Do you ever watch children play with their food?

The fork becomes an airplane. The peas become passengers. There are giggles. There is laughter. There is a whole world happening at the dinner table that has nothing — absolutely nothing — to do with nutrition.

Food, for a child, is not serious business. It is a portal.

Which raises a question worth sitting with: if food is so bound up with survival, why are children so gloriously non-serious about it? What do they know that we have forgotten? What are they doing that we have been trained to stop doing?

They are playing at the shoreline.

The Indian poet Rabindranath Tagore offered a single line that Donald Winnicott, one of the great thinkers of human development, returned to again and again throughout his life: **“On the seashore of endless worlds, children play.”** Winnicott saw in that image something essential about how human beings grow, create, and come alive. The shoreline, he understood, is not a boundary that separates two worlds. It is a third world entirely. An in-between zone where the borders are, as psychologist Terry Marks-Tarlow describes, “endlessly fertile, endlessly deep frontiers.”

On one side is the real land — food as fuel, food as sustenance, food as the thing that keeps the body alive. On the other side is the ocean. Vast. Alive. Imaginative. A world of possibility that is just as vital, just as important, and far less talked about.

The child holds both worlds at once. The fork is an airplane *and* a fork. The pea is a passenger *and* a pea. They do not choose. They live in the in-between, unbothered by the boundary between land and sea. They know, without knowing that they know, that both shores belong to the same world.

The body needs access to that in-between generative space the way it needs food.

We all want healthy, vital, thriving bodies. That is not in question. The longing for a body that feels alive, responsive, and well is one of the most deeply human desires there is. But here is what I keep coming back to: we cannot build a vital, generative body by attending to only half of what it needs.

Both sides of the shoreline are nourishment. Both are diet in the truest sense of the word. The fork-as-airplane is not a distraction from eating. It *is* eating — of a different and equally necessary kind. The body is a living organism. It hungers for the generative just as it hungers for the nutritive. These are not opposites. They are two shores of the same world.

What Donald Winnicott called *potential space* — that soft, in-between zone where play, creativity, and real relationship can happen — is not a luxury. It is the ground from which a truly healthy body grows. When that space is alive and available, life moves through us. Feelings can be felt without needing to be immediately fixed. Hunger can be sensed without demanding an instant response. We can sit with uncertainty without reaching for something to make it stop.

When that space collapses, something shifts in the body. The psychologist James Hillman described it simply: when imagination has nowhere to go, it moves into the body. What cannot be felt, played with, or held in relationship must find another way out. And food — immediate, physical, always available — becomes one of the most reliable exits.

This is not weakness. This is not a broken relationship with food. This is a living organism doing exactly what living organisms do — reaching for nourishment wherever it can find it. The problem is not the reaching. The problem is that one entire shore of nourishment has been declared irrelevant.

Brain researcher Jaak Panksepp spent decades studying what mammals need to thrive. Play, he found, is not optional. It is one of the brain's primary circuits — as built-in and essential as hunger or fear. When play is alive in us, we are more resilient, more connected, better able to regulate ourselves. When it goes quiet, the whole system tightens.

Stephen Porges, whose research has transformed our understanding of the nervous system, found something similar: the body cannot truly digest — food, experience, relationship, any of it — unless it first feels safe enough to be in that receptive state. Play is one of the conditions that creates that safety. Not the result of safety. One of its causes.

The child playing with her food is not wasting time. She is building the very capacities that allow her body to be healthy. She is, without knowing it, feeding herself on both shores at once.

And yet somewhere along the way, most of us leave the shoreline.

We are recruited away from it. Gradually, persistently, and with enormous financial muscle behind the recruitment. We have swallowed a collective story — that a healthy, vital body is built through food optimization, supplementation, discipline, and transformation photographs. Billions of dollars maintain that story. Billions more depend on us continuing to believe it.

This is the great cultural blind spot. We say we want vibrant, generative, alive bodies. And then we attend only to one half of what makes that possible. We fixate on what goes in — the food, the supplements, the protocols — while the other nutritional need of the body goes unmet. The relational, playful, imaginative, generative diet. The shore that has no Instagram filter. The nourishment that cannot be packaged or sold.

We are not embodying what we say we want. We are not being, within ourselves, what we want to see in the world. We want vitality but we live in urgency. We want aliveness but we stay on the managed, measured side of the shore. We want our bodies to be generative organisms — creative, responsive, alive — but we feed them only half of what generativity requires.

This book is not anti-food. It is not anti-exercise. It is naming the missing fifty percent of the conversation. The half that has never had a voice. The half the body has been quietly, persistently, exhaustedly reaching for through every diet, every cleanse, every discipline, every loop that never quite resolves.

The philosopher Anne Carson once described a runner who never reaches the finish line — each distance folding into itself, the reach continuing endlessly. That image lives in me when I think about compulsive reaching toward food, toward diets, toward the perfect body. The reach continues. The finish line recedes. Because we are looking for something that was never on that shore to begin with.

What if it was always at the shoreline itself — in the in-between, in the not-yet, in the space between reach and grasp where something alive and generative has been waiting all along?

I know what it feels like when the generative shore goes dark.

There are days when food takes on a quality of such seriousness that it feels like cardboard in my mouth. Like I am eating obligation rather than nourishment. Like each meal is a test I am trying not to fail, rather than a moment of ordinary, unremarkable life.

On those days, I notice I have projected something enormous onto food. A savior. An authority. Something that will finally get it right. I reach for the certainty of a food plan — something structured, prescribed, external. Because the uncertainty of my own living body feels, in those moments, too large to hold.

I know when I have lost the shoreline. I can feel it — that narrowing, that fixation on only one side of the world. The land side. The measurable, manageable, fuel side. And the going-blind to

everything the other shore holds. The body's own capacity to restore itself. To regenerate. To come alive again from the inside.

What I have come to understand is that those moments — the seriousness, the cardboard-eating, the reaching for the food plan — are not signs that something is wrong with me. They are signs that the generative shore has gone quiet. That I am living in only half the available world.

And half a world, however carefully tended, is never enough.

The question is not: how do I fix my relationship with food?

The question is: how do I find my way back to the shoreline?

The shoreline is not a comfortable place. It sits in uncertainty. It has soft edges. It may feel at first like there is nothing there — boring, dry, a waste of time. Both readers I described in the introduction may look at it and see nothing worth entering.

But the child at the dinner table doesn't need it to be comfortable. She doesn't need to understand it or resolve it or extract something useful from it. She simply stays there, letting the fork be an airplane, letting the pea be a passenger, letting the meal become something more than fuel without needing to explain how or why.

This is what a truly healthy, generative, vital body looks like in practice. Not just well-fed. Not just well-exercised. But inhabited. Playful. Alive to both shores. In relationship with the world in a way that goes beyond the transactional and the measurable.

This — exactly this — is the nourishment the body has been reaching for.

Not more information. Not a better system. Not stricter discipline or looser permission.

A return to the shoreline. A willingness to play there. To linger in the in-between space between what is nourishing and what is generative and discover — perhaps for the first time, perhaps again — that they were never two separate worlds.

They were always the same shore.

This is the body's native language. And this book is an invitation to speak it again.

Chapter 3: Full Throttle with the Brakes On

This chapter is about one of the body's quieter non-food nutritional needs: the need to tolerate intensity without immediately collapsing away from it. To stay at the edge of experience. To feel the full throttle and not be overtaken.

What does the shoreline actually feel like from the inside?

Not the concept of it. Not the image of the child with the fork-as-airplane, giggles and all. But the actual lived experience of standing at that edge — between the pull of the literal, non-generative compulsion to control or be controlled, and the possibility of something more. Between full throttle and the brakes. Between the out-of-control ocean that could swallow you and the controlled land you know too well.

This chapter is that experience. Not described from a distance. Written from inside it.

My hands tremble slightly as I type this chapter title, Full Throttle with the Brakes On, and I can feel my eyes begin to swell. I know this place intimately — the experience of being propelled forward at full speed while, at the very same time, desperately trying to slow myself down. There is a particular kind of sadness that lives here, a quiet but persistent sense of loss and powerlessness that settles into the body. I feel it as a kind of lifeless weight, or maybe something even stranger — a sense of life that has somehow lost its depth.

This is what it feels like to override my own limits, to move past my own edges as if they do not exist. It is the experience of abandoning the shoreline — that fertile, alive in-between — in favor of something far narrower and more consuming. Compulsive thought. Compulsive behavior. A kind of narrowing that both grips and diminishes at the same time.

And even as I write those words — compulsive, obsession — I feel the impulse to stop. There is a part of me that does not want this to be seen, that resists naming it at all. You, the reader, are not supposed to know this place inside of me. I am supposed to have myself together. I am supposed to be someone who has already moved through this, someone who can speak from a distance rather than from within it.

There is a fear that if I allow this to be visible, it will be misunderstood — reduced, dismissed, used against me. And so, rather than fully entering the experience, I find myself hovering just above it, close enough to gesture toward it, but not close enough to fully land inside it. It feels safer to circle the edges than to step directly into the center of what is actually happening.

And yet — this hovering, this circling, this not-quite-landing — this *is* the shoreline. This is what it looks like to stay at the edge rather than collapse toward either shore. I am not failing to enter the experience. I am doing exactly what the shoreline asks: staying close enough to feel it, without being overtaken by it.

I know I am not alone in this. We all carry these pockets — places where something takes hold and begins to run, where behavior becomes less about choice and more about momentum. Where the engine revs and the brakes struggle to hold.

These patterns are often treated as problems to be eliminated, as if something has gone wrong in us. But that way of seeing it, while understandable, misses something important.

Compulsion itself is not the problem. It is not an error to be erased, nor a drive that disappears once we become “well enough.” The psyche circles, fixates, returns again and again — not out of brokenness, but out of something still trying to be known. Something that got lost and keeps reaching back toward the light.

Carl Jung spent a lifetime sitting with these forces. He came to understand them not as enemies but as messengers — pointing toward something that hadn't yet found its way into relationship, into feeling, into conscious life. Compulsion, in this sense, is a kind of pressure. An insistence. Something in us knocking on the door, again and again, asking to be let in.

The work is not to silence that knocking. It is to learn how to open the door differently. To stay close enough to what is pressing without being swept away by it. To let what has been gripping slowly move — over time, with patience — from grip into gift.

I have come to think of this as the gift of the grip.

But here is where it gets hard. As a culture, we have largely lost the conditions that allow that kind of movement to happen. The shoreline — that soft, in-between space where compulsion can be met with curiosity rather than shame — is exactly what gets paved over first. Without it, what might have been a signal becomes a loop. What might have opened into something new tightens instead into repetition.

And so we hide.

We spend enormous amounts of energy — financially, emotionally, in relationship — trying to prevent exposure. We shape ourselves into forms that appear coherent, controlled, and resolved, all while something underneath continues to press for acknowledgment. That effort comes at a cost that is rarely named. Over time, it quietly starves the very capacities that would allow something genuinely new to emerge.

I know this not as an idea but as something I have lived. I know what it is to lose access to aliveness in the process of trying to maintain the appearance of control. To feel the slow suffocation that comes from never letting certain parts of experience be seen or held.

There is a great deal of life that can be lost this way — not because something is broken, but because the conditions needed for that life to breathe have never been made available.

Which brings me back to myself.

To my own compulsivity — forces that, when I cannot stay at the shoreline, drive me rather than move through me. Forces that pull me away from the edge of that fertile in-between and toward one shore only. The consuming shore. The one that swallows rather than plays.

I become frightened standing there. I feel shivers down my spine. And something humbling — the image of laying my sword down, entirely, because I will never beat this or fix this. It was never meant to be beaten or fixed. It was meant to be met. At its edge. With everything I have.

That is not a skill I was taught in school, in church, or within my family. It is a skill I am still learning.

So this is where the question and the story begin. How to recognize that there is a brake as well as a mighty gas pedal — and that both are needed. How to stay with the full throttle of the engine without being overtaken by it. How to feel its pull without immediately collapsing toward it.

At times, this feels impossible — as if the collapse is inevitable. And in a culture that does little to build these capacities, and instead increasingly exploits this sacred and vulnerable instinct for profit, it may be becoming more difficult. We are continually in a field of recruitment. It is, in many ways, the water we swim in.

So I won't offer false reassurance. There are moments when I genuinely do not know how far we have drifted toward collective collapse into looping compulsions.

But what I do know is this: if we have been given this overpowering instinct for obsession, we have also been given the capacity to meet it. To stay at the shoreline with it. To hold it in ways that can be lived, breathed, and — over time — transformed into something generative.

This chapter is evidence of that. Not a resolution. Not a cure. But a staying. A noticing. A willingness to write from inside the trembling rather than waiting until the trembling stops.

That is the shoreline in action. And it is, I am learning, enough to begin.

Chapter 4: The Forbidden Hunger

This chapter is about a hunger the body is rarely allowed to name. The need for a world that can receive desire. Overwhelming intensity. Wanting that does not apologize for itself. Without shame. Without collapse. Without food having to do a job of receiving these forbidden hungers, that it was never designed to do.

“What cannot be received as contact becomes pursuit.” Majia Lee

This chapter holds two people.

The first is the one who knows the stalker intimately. Who has felt her awaken — the eyes widening, the neck reaching forward, the fingers curling. Who has disappeared into the chase and come out the other side overwhelmed, ashamed, flooded. Who has spent years believing this part of her was the problem.

The second is the one who has never met the stalker. Or so she believes. She is composed. Disciplined. Her relationship with food is handled. She looks at the first woman with something she might call concern, but which carries the particular heat of contempt. She does not recognize herself in any of this. Both of them are in this chapter.

Because the stalker does not belong to one woman. She belongs to the split. And the split belongs to all of us.

The Stalker Within

I have a stalker part in me.

I sense shame around the corner as I write this. My bowels tighten, my jaw tightens, and I feel sadness and tears. If I ask the tears to speak, they might say — it's forbidden. What's forbidden? My stalking. I'm not allowed.

The sadness builds. The corners of my mouth drop down. My head gets heavy as I type this out. I feel like I want to crawl into a hole and die.

She feels young. Child-like. She wants to crawl into her mother's lap, to feel her warmth and softness. But that isn't allowed. So she stalks food instead.

It starts with a thought. I entertain the thought. Anticipation grows — excitement, arousal, tension building in the body. Then something switches.

The stalker awakens.

I sense myself leaving my body, and at the same time still in it. Fingers curled in. Head pushed forward. Eyes wide. Obsession overtakes the mind to the point of something trance-like, and I barely notice my body anymore.

Everything around me collapses. Time. Relationships. Body. Agency. Nothing else exists except me, as the stalker, and my target.

Food.

It feels pleasurable and miserable at the same time.

And when she catches it — when she consumes without restraint — the tables turn. I am the one being consumed now. Overtaken. Overwhelmed by the encounter. It is too much. But that is the point. She went beyond what she can handle — mentally, emotionally, physically. The intensity was never meant to be regulated. It is an encounter that exceeds her capacity.

And still — it takes two. The degree to which I consume is the degree to which I am consumed.

This part of me is not wrong.

She is not pathological. Her instincts are sharp. Her orientation is precise. She knows how to move toward something with force, with focus, with aliveness.

But she has been given the wrong object.

In the absence of a world that can receive her, she has turned toward food. And the body has paid the price.

What she needs is not suppression. Not control. Not elimination.

She needs a different holding environment. A place where pursuit does not end in collapse. Where intensity does not have to discharge into harm. Where she can move toward, encounter, and be changed — without destroying the body that carries her.

The problem was never the hunger. It was that there was nowhere for hunger to go..

The Split

But here is what makes this more than a personal story.

The stalker does not exist in isolation. She exists because of a split — one side of us that chases, hungers, and pursues without apology, and another side that locks all of that away as sinful, shameful, or out of control. One side runs wild. The other side shuts everything down. Neither side is free.

This split is not new. It is not personal. It is one of the oldest stories in Western culture.

Religion has long been one of the primary ways this split gets managed. Desire, intensity, the wanting that exceeds polite boundaries — these get cast out. Labeled fallen. Assigned to the broken ones. And as Thomas Moore writes, when we do not bring desire into our lives in embodied ways, it does not disappear. It goes underground. It gets darker, more rigid, harder to reach. It finds another object.

Food, for many of us, has become that object.

The stalker did not create herself. She was created by the split.

And the split was created long before any of us were born. But we are responsible for what comes next — for integrating her, rather than shaming her into silence or letting her run the show.

The Untouchable One Within

Which brings us to the second woman in this chapter. She is the other side of the same split.

She has built her life around not being the stalker. She is controlled, composed, disciplined, clean. Untouchable. Her relationship with food is handled. She does not binge. She does not chase. She does not disappear into the obsession.

Or so she believes.

What she may not see is that her composure depends on someone else being the messy one. The split requires both sides. Her sense of self — her worth, her identity — is built around not being the broken one. Brokenness does not touch her. Which means she needs the broken one to exist somewhere outside herself. She needs someone else to carry what she cannot make contact with inside herself.

This is more common than we think. The person who has it together often needs the person who doesn't. Who holds the forbidden hungers — not out of cruelty, but because the split requires both roles to stay intact. The helper needs the one who needs fixing. The cop needs the robber. Luke Skywalker needs Darth Vader. Take away the broken one and the together one loses her shape.

The Untouchable and the Stalker are a system. They maintain each other.

The Untouchable looks down at the Stalker — get your shit together, look at me for answers, I know the way — and in doing so, pushes outward what she cannot hold inward. Her own sealed hunger. Her own forbidden reaching. Her own stalker, locked in a basement she will not enter.

Nobody wants to play the villain that holds forbidden hungers. Everyone wants to be the hero. But the story requires both. And when one person refuses to play the broken one, she doesn't disappear — she gets assigned to someone else.

The Stalker has been playing that role for a very long time. Carrying the hunger the Untouchable will not claim. Cleaning dishes that were never hers to clean.

What the Split Costs

When this kind of forbidden hunger or desire gets split off and shamed, it doesn't disappear. It goes underground. It finds other objects to attach to — food, compulsive helping, the endless obsession to optimize the body through diet and exercise. It becomes more rigid, more hidden, harder to reach. More desperate. Optimization is not the enemy. But when it becomes the whole story, something else is quietly starving. That is what the Untouchable carries. Not abundance. Starvation of a different kind. Abundance is integrating both sides.

Both the Stalker and the Untouchable are paying the price of the same split. The Stalker pays it through collapse — consumed by what she consumes, flooded, overwhelmed, ashamed.

The Untouchable pays it through deadness — dried up, suffocating, the prune-like lifelessness that no Instagram filter can reach.

And the culture that created the split keeps building billion dollar industries around encouraging the split and feeding of both sides, ensuring they never find their way home to each other. The diet industry depends on the Untouchable's vigilance. The binge industry — food delivery, ultra-processed comfort, the endless scroll of food content — depends on the Stalker's desperation. Both are monetized.

Neither finds their way home to the shoreline.

The Way Home

Audre Lorde wrote that eros is an assertion of the life force — of creative energy empowered. Not sin. Not weakness. Not something to be managed or assigned to the broken ones. A life force. Something that, when it is not embodied, acts itself out destructively. And when it is — when it finally finds its rightful place — it opens into a vitality and intimacy that nothing else can touch.

The Stalker is not the enemy of health. She is misassigned aliveness. The Untouchable is not the guardian of health. She is misassigned fear. Both of them are standing at the wrong shore.

What both of them need — what the split itself needs — is the shoreline.

The in-between space where the Stalker's hunger doesn't have to end in collapse and the Untouchable's composure doesn't have to mean no contact. Where desire can be felt without immediately consuming everything in its path. Where hunger can be held without immediately being managed into silence.

Where both sides of the same soul can finally stand together at the edge of the ocean — not drowning, not retreating — but playing.

The Stalker does not need to be stopped. She needs a world that isn't forbidden, but available to receive what she has been trying to move toward all along.

The Untouchable has not been protected from that forbidden world. She has been avoiding it. And it has been waiting for her, just as long.

The home of the shoreline was always waiting for both of them.

About the Author: Majia Lee



Over decades of personal, academic and professional study, what has emerged for Majia is both a model for restoring one's relationship with food and body to its rightful place, and a body based diet that fits for her and her unique needs.

It took years of unraveling — decoupling herself from cultural messaging, along with decoupling attachment needs, sexual needs, worth, creativity, and identity from food and body. Learning,

slowly, that the body was never designed to be the source of status, lovability, or aliveness. That food was never meant to carry what she and society had asked it to carry.

She is a doctor of Somatic and Archetypal Psychology, a practitioner of somatic and nervous system approaches, and the creator of the Body-Based Diet model.

She wrote this book because her fingers wanted to have a voice and a reach. A lingering expression and contact with the forbidden. One that restores relationships into their rightful places. One that embodies juiciness — the real kind, the kind that doesn't end a good meal in grief — something she now knows from the inside.

She wrote it so you might find your way there too