

Joy: Okay. My name is Joy Black. I live in Killeen, Texas and I am 19 years old.

Interviewer: Joy, tell me a little bit about your wellness experience because I believe you've had a bit of a unique one ever since you were little Joy?

Joy: Yeah. So, growing up my mom was a Natural Food Chef and owned a natural food culinary school. So, I grew up in the kitchen, I grew up eating healthy. I was a vegan and didn't have any sugar until I was 5, and then you know my parents weren't together so my dad ate like crap and I started eating like crap at his house. My mom would always tell me, you know okay like so I want to eat something that's not good for me, okay let's say I want eat an ice cream sandwich. My mom would say, "You know that if you eat an ice cream sandwich you're going to have a bellyache later, right?" And I was like, "Yeah." She is like, "Well, are you willing to deal with that bellyache?" And I say yes or no, and then I eat what I am going to eat and I have to deal with the way it affects my body. But from a very young age I had the understanding of how food affected my body and as I got into my teenage years I kind of stopped paying attention. I kind of went to a dark place and stopped paying attention to how food affected my body, but recently I've been able to rediscover that and rediscover my love for food and healthy living and it's awesome.

Interviewer: There's going to be – are we good?

Speaker 3: Yes.

Interviewer: Okay. There's going to be plenty of people who are in a similar stage of life as you watching this. If they are in that dark place that you are in what would you say to help them get out of it?

Joy: For me when I was in my dark place I had a very unhealthy relationship with food and in order to get out of that dark place I had to rebuild that relationship. So, I needed to eat food that's going to fuel my body, you know food is fuel and if you eat the right food you can fuel your body to live the life you want to live. Without the right food your body won't work, your mind won't work to live the life you want to live, and that's something I've learned from personal experience from being miserable when I am not eating right to being amazing happy beyond my wildest dreams when I'm nourishing my body well.

Interviewer: So, Joy you mentioned that to have a quality of life that you can enjoy having a quality of food that will fuel that is very important why didn't you choose quality during that period of time in your life?

Joy: Part of it was struggling with body dysmorphia you know I couldn't see how I actually looked. I thought that I looked fat and I was severely underweight. It was about control for me at a certain point, and so I would control the calories and I would control the number on the scale to have a focus, to feel like I was doing something. And the only result I really had was starving myself in misery. I don't know what else to say.

Interviewer: What helped you to see that you were more than just that number on the scale?

Joy: I started rock climbing and I realized that I physically could not workout the way I wanted to. I was getting dizzy, I was getting lightheaded just like I felt weak like my muscles felt weak, and so I changed the way I was eating. But for me I had to reach a point where I was just miserable, and then I found something I wanted to do and I couldn't do that if I wasn't eating right. So, for some people they want to chase their kids around and they can't chase their kids around anymore. For some people they want to be able to walk their dog, you know go on a nice walk and feel nice. Feel the fresh air, feel the breeze enjoy it you know whatever it is in life that gives you that little bit of happiness that gives you a little bit of hope like you're going to have to give up – like hold onto that. That's what I had to do is I had to hold onto something that made me happy that I would have to give up if I wasn't eating right and I used that to drive me.

Interviewer: What role did your mother have in helping you to heal your relationship with food?

Joy: My mom let me kind of do what I want. When I was young she made me eat – you know when you're a little kid you eat what your parents give you, and as I got older she let me learn how things affect my body and make my own decisions. But actually when I was going through my dark time my relationship with my mother was not great, and so in fixing my relationship with my mom she helped me fix my relationship with my food. And it was a beautiful healing experience for both of us. She started rock climbing with me. We were active together, we were eating together, we were cooking together, we were communicating better. I know for me if I don't eat well I get really angry really fast. If I am not eating well I am like in tears angry like that and I don't like that person. The person I am when I eat well I love her. I have an amazing family, I have great people in my life, I feel great.

Interviewer: It's cool. When we spoke to Carlos he had a really interesting point where he was it's like it's you in some level you guys get along, because he was saying his life was

objectively wonderful but he couldn't see it. It seems like you had a bit of the same experience?

Joy: Yeah.

Interviewer: Where there's beauty all around you, there's quality all around you but if there's not quality in you, you can't experience it. Can you talk a little bit about that?

Joy: So, for me like I have my inner demons and I hadn't faced them and I couldn't see how beautiful my life was. I had the same life when I was miserable and when I was happy. I was just able to see it when I was happy. What changed was what I was eating. I gave my body the fuel, I gave my brain the fuel and I was able to see and appreciate the beauty in my life that was already there.

Interviewer: So is it fair to say that the quality of food you eat actually determines the quality of your experience of reality?

Joy: Yeah. The quality of the food I eat definitely severely impacts the or almost dictates the quality of my life and how I experience it.

Interviewer: So, what would you say to – so I like for example, when I was a teenager I would be kind of harassed if I was like, "You know I want to eat some little bit different." I mean I started on this journey when I was very young. I remember we'd be like 2 days for a football camp and everyone would be ordering pizza and I would have like a can of tuna fish, and like I was lame, I was an idiot, I was what are you doing man like be a man and obviously that's unique too then. But what can someone do who is in that sort of an environment to rise up?

Joy: Honestly for me I grew up in Austin where everybody knew my mom, and the school I went to was on the campus of the culinary school and the lunches that were served you could – if you wanted school lunch you got it from the macrobiotic restaurant that was also connected. So, I didn't have as much pushback from outside on what I was eating when I was eating healthy. There were definitely times in my life where I would eat salad and people would be like, "That's rabbit food, like that's what food eats." And I'm like, "Okay, whatever. I feel great I don't know what your life is like. I don't know what feel like but I feel great and your negativity is not going to stop me from doing what makes me feel great." And that's what it is. If you let every little thing that a person does or says like negatively affect you you're going to be living in it all the time but I focus on myself, I

focus on my family, I focus on my food and I focus on living the life I want to live and people who are not going to support me in that are not people I need in my life.

Interviewer: It's [inaudible 00:10:19] forget this. We'll let this car go by. This is going to maybe date me. I'm not used to being like significantly older. I'm usually one of the younger people here, but I am not this time. Do you know who Dr. Seuss is?

Joy: Yeah.

Interviewer: Okay, cool. Sorry, so here is this...

Joy: Who doesn't know who Dr. Seuss is are you serious?

Interviewer: I don't know man.

Joy: I know people who don't know who Dr. Seuss is?

Interviewer: Because Dr. Seuss is a thing when I was growing up.

Joy: Twice in my life like I've been asked who the Beatles were and I wanted to slap someone.

Interviewer: Okay. Dr. Seuss has this thing those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind. Does that resonate with you?

Joy: Yeah. Those who mind don't matter and those who matter don't mind definitely resonates with me. I have very few close friends. I have very few friends period, because the friends I choose to keep are close friends. I spend my time doing things that are going to improve my life that I am going to feel good doing. So, supportive people, yeah I hang out with supportive people. I cook healthy food like I'll get something – I'll get a new ingredient in the kitchen or I'll get some new cookware or something and I get excited about it, like I get a new cookbook I get excited about it, I find a new recipe I get excited and I just want to go in the kitchen and I want to cook and I want to share that with the people around me. When my friends come over they know that they're going to be fed.

Interviewer: That's so beautiful. Right now I'm imagining and I can almost guarantee you that this is going to happen. There is a mother or a father out there who is watching this crying saying, "I wish my child could have that experience, but I don't know how to help them see what they can be experiencing in life. I don't know how to help them." What would you say to that parent?

Joy: You don't know what you don't know. There's so much false information out there when it comes to dieting, and for me it's not about following a diet it's about living a lifestyle. And educate the people around you like find your love and your passion for food and for living and share that with the world, because I can sit here and talk about what I do and talk about what works for me and all that all day long, and it could affect you or it could not affect you. The more passion I have for it the more I'm going to be able to affect you with what I say. People can watch how I live and see that I live a great life you know it's not just talk, and so the people around me I lead by example and that's what my mom did for me. She led by example and when I was ready to make a change I reached out to her, and I followed her example. But her telling me what to do was never going to work. It was her showing me what to do and allowing me to choose that path for myself that was really life changing.

Interviewer: That's huge, that's really huge. So, it sounds like the example who you are as a parent who you are the example you give off is the most – it speaks louder than any words you could ever say?

Joy: Yeah. I have a 15-year old stepson and I encourage him to eat healthy foods. And if he won't at least eat some of them enough to sustain him I will no longer buy what he wants to eat. I will only buy what he needs to eat, and so he eats what he needs to eat and he gets to eat what he wants to eat. And I'm trying to give him the same understanding of, "Oh, when I eat this I have the energy to go work on my grandma's farm. When I eat this I don't have that energy." But that's something he is going to have to see for himself. He is 15 I'm not going to micro manage what he eats, but I do definitely want to educate him so that when he is on his own he can make an informed decision about what he wants to eat.

Interviewer: If there is a young lady or a young man who is watching this and can't see the beauty that their body represents what can they do to help see themselves?

Joy: So, for me I didn't realize the beauty on the inside or the beauty on the outside at all. And now I see that beauty and I share that beauty with the world. I've found things that I'm passionate about, I've found things that feed my soul, I've surrounded myself with people who I like who I am when I'm around them that's what I do everything I do in my life I do it to better myself. I do it to like the person looking back in the mirror at me at the end of the day. There is so much beauty but like inside each and every person everyone has their own thoughts, and their own ideas, and their own talents. And find what's meaningful to you and share it with the world because having a passion for

something is beautiful. It's beautiful. It gets other people excited. It starts things and so many think that they're just insignificant little blip and maybe you're an insignificant little blip. Maybe we all are insignificant little blips, but for me what matters is making a difference in my life and making a difference in the lives of the people around me and having that be a positive difference like someone meets me and "Oh, wow. She seemed happy. She seemed friendly, she seems like an awesome person," you know cool. Maybe I made someone smile today that's awesome; you know just these small little things that just help me live a better life.

Interviewer: It's amazing how that life that is defined by high quality is fueled by food that is of the highest quality, and how tightly those are correlated because it seems like your life you are experiencing a terribly a low quality life low quality relationship with your body, low quality relationship with life, low quality relationship with food high quality relationship with food, high quality relationship with your body, high quality relationship with life how do you see those things relating to each other?

Joy: The quality of the food I eat dictates the quality of my life. And it's not about calories, it's not. They used to think that it was about calories. I tried the whole calorie counting thing, and I lost more weight and was just overall healthier. There was a time in my life where I had a little bit of extra weight on me. I was on medication that was causing my metabolism to slowdown. I had tanked my metabolism pretty bad with starving myself in calorie counting and it took probably a year to a year-and-a-half to be able to stabilize my eating and my body enough to get to a healthy weight. Not that my weight was super unhealthy, but get to my body's healthy weight. Everybody's body is built in a way to have – there's kind of a window of what's healthy for you, and so for my body to find what's healthy for me and to get my metabolism back on track, to get my mental health back on track because not only did I tanked my physical health I tanked my mental health. And so yeah it took about a year, year-and-a-half of eating high quality foods to really even myself out. After that I would go through stages of eating not so healthy foods or eating healthier foods. There has always been a pretty good blend of high quality foods into my diet aside from my very low point, but now I know okay if I want to eat something that's not high quality food I need to think about how it's going to affect me, I need to think about do I have room in my life for this emotional chaos that it's going to cause because there's going to be a crash from that sugar. There's going to be anxiety, there's going to be anger. Is there space in my life; is there space around me for me to go through this? Just like people decide if they're going to drink tonight can I deal with the hangover tomorrow? Do I eat this low quality food, because it tastes good and suffer



how I feel? It's like alcohol. So, really being able to make an informed decision about what I eat and leaving the guilt and the shame behind about it. If I choose to eat something I'm going to make a conscious choice, I'm going to eat it slowly, and I'm going to enjoy every bite I don't need to hide it, I don't need to stash it, I don't need to just eat it really fast that nobody sees me. And maybe I only take one bite and enjoy that one bite and leave the guilt and the shame at the door and start fresh in that next moment.

Interviewer: You described there is this window where the body is at its optimum state. I've heard that referred to as a set point. In David's work it's called the Set Point. Have you found that after that year-and-a-half once you got into that window, once you got into that place do you feel like you've had to work hard to stay there?

Joy: No. Once I get my body to my set point it's effortless.

Interviewer: That one was okay.

Joy: That's it.

Interviewer: What do you like most about this high quality optimal version of yourself?

Joy: The thing I like most about this optimal high quality version of myself is I get to smile and mean it like for real like I get to smile and mean it. I can go the gym and work out for an hour-and-a-half and be okay. I don't pass out, I'm not super shaky and dizzy, I feel good. I can work out, I can get those endorphins going in my body and I can feel good. I can eat good food, and I can feel good, and I can do things that I love and feel good doing them and that's it. Before I could do things that I love to do and not enjoy it, and now the things I love to do, the things I even moderately like to do I get to enjoy. It's the little things; it's enjoying the breeze on my face because I'm comfortable enough in my body to notice how my body feels. That's just a little thing like this moment is okay. Maybe there can be another okay moment, and just taking that until they're almost all more than okay moments.

Interviewer: It's beautiful. Are your dreams and aspirations different now based on what you know about who you are that you've learned over the past couple of years?

Joy: I wouldn't say that my dreams and aspirations are different than before. I would say that I now have dreams and aspirations when I didn't before. My life seemed pointless and on a pretty steady downhill that was going pretty fast. There was a point in my life I

didn't think I was going to make it to see 20. Now I see a beautiful life ahead of me, so that's something that's really powerful.

Interviewer: It sounds like healing your relationship with food saved your life?

Joy: Yes without a doubt. I've gone through struggles with depression, anxiety, drug addiction, PTSD and have been able to heal from all of those things with food. Right after I detoxed this last time rather than just trying to eat whatever might taste good or whatever I keep down I ate clean like I ate good high quality foods and that is all I ate. And I was feeling amazing after having detoxed within a week-and-a-half like my body had the energy it needed to do the healing, it needed to do, and it had it fast like just making that change. The change in how I feel happens really quickly more of the visual results can take a little bit longer but how I feel starts to happen really, really quickly the positive effects from good food and the negative effects from not so good food.

Interviewer: If you could hop on a time machine go back and sit next to Joy who is at that depressed low point what would you say to her?

Joy: If I could go back and talk to myself at my darkest point I would tell myself that it's okay to be you, it's okay to embrace who you are, it's okay to be beautiful, it's okay to love yourself and it's okay. I am worthy you know I am worthy of having a good life, I am worthy of having a healthy relationship with food, I'm worthy of having a healthy relationship with my body and with myself. And for the longest time I didn't think I deserved it, but I do and each and every person deserves to have a good life, a good relationship with their body, and a good relationship with food.

Interviewer: You've mentioned earlier that it is through your mother's example that you were able to heal your relationship with food and that by healing your relationship with food you were able to save your life. So, by the transitive property of language would you say that your mother's example saved your life?

Joy: I would say that my mother's example with healthy eating saved my life.

Interviewer: How does it make you feel to know that your mother saved your life?

Joy: The fact that my mom was able to save my life with food is awesome. Growing up like she was saving peoples' lives with food all the time and growing up eating right you don't think that the life that's going to be saved by this food one day is yours. You don't think you'll even get to that point where you have to get back on track, where you have relearn these things, where you have re-embrace these things. I had it handed to me in



the beginning and I threw it away, and I am so, so fortunate to have gotten it back and to have saved my life. And to be able to share this love of food, and this healthy living with my boyfriend and to be able to save his life too that's amazing. That's all we ever want to do is save and help our families and to be able to really do that is truly amazing.

Interviewer: If you could eat anything for breakfast what would you eat for breakfast?

Joy: Tofu scramble for breakfast every day would be my dream.

Interviewer: What's in a tofu scramble?

Joy: It's tofu, carrots kale.

Interviewer: Sorry I know that's devastating.

Speaker 3: Flat beat though.

Interviewer: It is a flat beat.

Speaker 3: Go ahead.

Interviewer: So, what's in a tofu scramble?

Joy: Okay. So, a tofu scramble is – when I make it I usually do tofu from tofu, kale, carrots, onions I do some cumin, a little bit cayenne sometimes, Mexican oregano or regular oregano if you don't have Mexican oregano on hand. And I love it. It's super fast, it's super easy. You can change up the seasoning and have a completely different flavor. I like mine with little bit of salsa, but you can have beans with it, you can have avocado with it, you can have some fresh fruit whatever you want to pair with it. It's delicious.

Interviewer: If you could have anything for lunch what would you have?

Joy: If I could have anything I wanted for lunch I would probably do salmon with some broccoli and some kale sautéed with garlic and olive oil.

Interviewer: Can I have some too?

Joy: Yeah.

Interviewer: Like my ideal – my wife literally eats salmon and kale every single night for dinner.

Joy: Yeah, I would love to eat salmon and kale every night for dinner.

Interviewer: So, let's talk about dinner. If you could have anything for dinner, you already had salmon for lunch, what would you have for dinner?

Joy: I could have anything I wanted for dinner, and I already had salmon for lunch, I would probably either do pan fried tofu or deep fried tofu or steak. I love steak, and then in terms of vegetables spinach, cauliflower whatever I have fresh in the fridge that I can either sauté with some garlic and some olive oil or I can blanch real quick you know just something fresh.

Interviewer: When you travel how do you continue to eat high quality foods?

Joy: When I travel I make sure that I pack enough to get at least to where I am going, and then first thing I do when I get there is I go to grocery store. So, I do apples travel well, peanut butter is harder to take on the plane but you can take if you can fit it in your court ziplock, nuts you know pecans, peanuts, cashews. We eat a lot of nuts in my house. And a lot of restaurants have options that you can get. If you are willing to modify what they're offering to have it work for you. I can look at menu and oh well this salad has tortilla strips and whatever okay I'm going to order the salad without tortilla strips, you know this salad has a lot of dressing on it that has a lot of sugar so I'm going to get oil and vinegar instead. You know little modifications that you can make you know maybe it comes with rice, maybe it comes with potatoes you just substitute it for some broccoli or some kale you know something fresh. So, you get to the airport you have an hour-and-a-half layover and you go sit down at one of the restaurants and you get some meat and some high quality vegetables, some high quality foods.

Interviewer: It's beautiful.

Joy: Healthy food is out there if you're willing to look for it.

Interviewer: It's cool.

Joy: Oh, hummus. I love hummus.

Interviewer: I too. You enjoy hummus?

Speaker 3: I love hummus.

Interviewer: He loves some hummus. If someone were to say Joy what's the secret what would you say?

Joy: Okay. If someone would ask me what the secret is I would tell them pay attention to how what you eat affects your body and eat foods that makes you feel good.

Interviewer: Would you also say pay attention to how the foods you eat affects your mind?

Joy: Yes.

Interviewer: Can you talk a little bit about I think a lot of people think that food only affects them from the neck down?

Joy: So, food is fuel for your entire body your brain included. So, for me if I eat good highest quality food and someone cuts me off in traffic I am fine. If I am not eating high quality food my brain is not functioning the way it needs to function, and someone cuts me off in traffic and I am yelling, I'm screaming, and I am pissed off, and I'm anxious, and I'm aggravated and then I get home and I'm pissed off because someone cut me off in traffic and now I am snapping at my boyfriend, right? And now there are two dirty dishes and I am snapping at my stepson for not doing the dishes, and that can all be fixed by me eating high quality foods to give my brain to give my body the fuel that it needs to be the person I want to be.