

Ep #219: Bringing Size-Inclusivity to the Mainstream with Louise Green



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With Your Host

Jill Angie

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Welcome to *The Not Your Average Runner Podcast*. If you're a woman who has never felt athletic but you still dream about becoming a runner, you are in the right place. I'm Jill Angie, a certified running and life coach, and I teach women how to start running, feel confident, and change their lives. And now I want to help you.

Jill: Hey Rebels. So I am here this week with an amazing human being that I cannot wait for you to meet. Her name is Louise Green and she is an author, influencer, award-winning size-inclusive fitness trainer who has been changing the narrative of our fitness culture since 2007. So she's been around this for a while.

You might know her as the founder of Big Fit Girl the brand, and a fitness app of the same name. She has published two books and she writes a monthly fitness column in *Self* magazine. Most recently she founded the Big Fit Academy to bring size inclusivity to the mainstream through educating wellness professionals and brands.

I recently just took her size-inclusive fitness professional course. It was amazing and I was immediately like, "Louise, we got to get you on the show." So welcome and thank you so much for joining me today.

Louise: Thank you for having me, I'm excited.

Jill: I am too. I mean I feel like we've known each other for years, but this is the first time that we've really sat down and had a conversation about size inclusivity and fitness for larger bodies. So I'm excited that you're here.

Louise: Yeah, thank you.

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Jill: So for those that aren't familiar with your story, can we start by maybe you could tell us a little about your own fitness journey and how you ended up doing what you do.

Louise: So, I think like many of us I was on this perpetual weight loss journey, like stuck in this cycle. The cycle that we all know about now, that attempt, fail, attempt, fail. Internalize the failure as my own, think I was a big loser. And that went on for over a decade.

And I joined this running group in Vancouver in an attempt to lose weight, thinking that the running magazines have these really lean runners on the front and I thought, "You know what? Running is my ticket. If I start running, I'm going to be lean, I'm going to look like them."

So I went and it was the most profound experience I think I've had in my life because it changed everything for me. And I wasn't expecting it to in this way, I was expecting to go and lose weight. But what ended up happening is I got there and everybody looked like a real runner. They had the proper gear and the headlamps, and I didn't. I showed up in early days Lulu Lemon baggy yoga pants and I didn't have any of the gear.

And I walked in and this woman stood up before us and said, "My name is Kris, I'm going to be your run leader." And she was a plus-sized woman. And this was probably back in 2005 so social media wasn't abundant, we all had flip phones, so you weren't on your smart phone hashtagging plus sized fitness and seeing all these wonderful examples of people that looked like me.

I really had never seen a woman that looked that me that was a runner, that was in fitness, and certainly not in fitness leadership. So immediately I was taken back and I felt safe with her. I felt like, "Okay, I'm amongst one

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of my one, all of these really intimidating real runner people are scaring the crap out of me but because Kris is here, I felt like okay, maybe I can do this.”

One single representation of somebody that looked that me had such a profound impact on my life. I trained for the 12 weeks, never once did I hear from this woman, “Bikini season is coming, run hard” or “Do you know how many calories you just expended?” It was never anything about that.

She talked about athleticism, she talked about digging deep and harnessing your power as a woman. And further to that she was the first woman that I had met that was plus size that wasn't trying to lose weight. The purpose of exercise for her was athleticism.

And that experience just changed everything for me very intensely. My thinking changed, my outlook on my body changed, my perception of what health looks like changed. And she propelled my athleticism into 10Ks and half marathons and triathlons because I was finally in a space where I wasn't in that model of failure.

I had always equated fitness to expenditure and I was tethering it to diet culture. So it was always this stop start relationship. It never was about the athleticism, it was about how much can I eat if I do X, Y, and Z? Because I was starving.

Jill: So I love that so much. So you literally had this moment with seeing one example of somebody doing it differently that made you realize, “Oh wow, there are other options out there for me aside from diet culture cycle.”

Louise: Yes, and I had never even swept up against anything that indicated that. This was like boom, in my face. I was like, “What? I can actually just

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do this and like my body and love my body and embrace it and be an athlete?”

Jill: Oh my God. And I think you and I both have the same mission in life, is to let as many people know about this well-kept secret that this is a thing. So how did you go from kind of this realization and training for half marathons and triathlons to becoming a fitness trainer yourself?

Louise: So I worked in film and television at the time so I was very much part of the problem as far as what we visually see in our visual landscape. I did the casting process for a lot of film and television. And I also sat on the other side of the desk as an agent.

And so we were looking at people that were really slender, thin, atypical, beautiful, what idealism is really after. And even those people we were giving feedback such as, “The producer says you need to lose some weight” or, “The producer says you need to whiten your teeth.” We were picking people apart as part of our job.

So here I am on the weekends out with Kris just like full of body liberation and then going back to my desk on Monday morning and sitting down and looking at these people and telling them these awful things. And one day it just stopped resonating. I was like, “This is so wrong.” And prior to that I actually didn't realize that it was.

So I left, I just left. I said I'm leaving. And I left a very successful career behind and I opened a fitness business dedicated to plus size women.

Jill: I love that because once you see that truth about the world, you can't unsee it. You cannot unsee diet culture once you've stepped outside of it

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and looked at it for what it is. And I can imagine that would have been like impossible to stay in your job. Just absolutely impossible.

Louise: It was impossible. And the more that I liberated myself, and I think I had a very unique position because I was going through this transformation myself. But I've also had my finger in the advertising and film and television pie, so to speak. And so I was seeing this ugliness here and I was feeling the ugliness inside. I was feeling it every day that I wasn't good enough.

I have a body much like yours, we're not going to be skinny. We are genetically made up, I'm never going to be what I was always trying to be. And I'm never going to be what the people at the diet places said I needed to be within this range.

I mean I hadn't been that weight since I was like nine. And as an adult, in my adult body, I was trying to. And I was like, "Jeez if I have to lose that much weight, there's something really wrong with me." And I always felt like there was something wrong.

Jill: Yeah, and it turns out it was never you at all.

Louise: No, and my job backed that up too though. So I was kind of living in this fear of like— And you don't have to have a job in advertising to feel that, all you have to do is live in our society. Because the advertising and the film and the television is out there. It's out there so a lot of people feel this way.

Jill: Yeah, I mean, all you have to do is be on Instagram.

Louise: 100%.

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Jill: Or Facebook to see it. It's just in your face all the time.

Okay, so you went from kind of being, as you said, part of the problem to this internal metamorphosis to opening your own gym, your own fitness studio for plus sized women. Talk to me a little bit about that evolution.

When you first started doing that was it like all the plus size women just came running to you? Or did you have to do some education? What was that like? Because I think this would have been what the early 2000s, or 2007, right?

Louise: 2007.

Jill: Yeah, I mean, when I think back to like 14, 15 years ago, that wasn't necessarily a thing that people even knew to look for. So how did you work with your first clients? And, I mean, did you give them some reeducation on how they could think about themselves in their bodies? What was that like?

Louise: So basically, I wanted to give back to women what had been given to me. That gift of liberation where like, "Hey, you don't have to be counting calories for the rest of your life." So I opened up, it was a boot camp business. So I eventually did have a studio as well, but we opened up a boot camp in my neighborhood, actually just down the street.

And on the first day, so how I started to attract clients was on Craigslist. I started to put ads on Craigslist. And on the first day I got an email from this national Canadian newspaper, this was my opening day, saying, "We find what you're doing very interesting. And we would like to come out and do a story on this." So I was like, "Okay." Not thinking it was a big deal, but it was like a full double page feature in a national newspaper.

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And once that came out— So basically, the first class was like four friends and like two real clients. Because now I have this newspaper coming, I can't just be there with two real clients. So I had to make it look a little bit more abundant.

And this national newspaper showed up and it was printed maybe a week later. And the emails from across the country started coming in, like steadfast. Are you thinking about coming here? I'm in Saskatchewan, I'm in Ontario.

And I was in that moment that I was like, you know Oprah talks about that aha moment. I'm like, “This is a thing. This is a thing, that people are intimidated and scared.” And there's a whole, I think we'll talk about this later when we talk about the training for trainers. But there's a whole lived experience here that many plus size people go through that is so misunderstood in our industry.

And so when you say, like I felt when I saw Kris, that moment of safety like I'm amongst one of my own, I think there's a sense of safety that when we say this is dedicated to you, this is for you, you don't have to fit into what the mainstream is doing. Because so many people try to do that and it doesn't work for them.

That's one of the other reasons why I started the program, is because I was a boot camp participant, and they would drive us up hills running in the rain. And somebody in a larger body would come and they couldn't keep up and they'd just got home. And I was like, “Where are those people going? And why doesn't anyone care? And why isn't there equal opportunity here?”

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And I just started to ask myself those questions and started to see that there was this massive gap where a massive audience, millions of people are not being served.

Jill: Yeah, I mean, because I don't know the statistics off the top of my head, but I think that more than half, at least more than half of the United States, and I'm assuming Canada is probably similar, is considered plus size or larger bodied or whatever word you want to use. And yet we're still pretending like they're either not there or that they don't belong in fitness.

At the same time we're saying you all need to lose weight. But we're not going to make a fitness group for you because you don't belong there. It's a very convoluted statement. So I absolutely love that you that you recognize that and created a space for these folks. Because I don't know, I think it's kind of leading by example.

And I kind of want to sort of segue a little bit into talking about what it's like to be a plus size, a larger bodied fitness professional in a smaller bodied world. Because we both had that experience where we know what it's like to run in a larger body. We know what it's like to lift weights, and to swim, and to do all the things in a larger body.

And I don't know, do you ever get when you talk to, I'm going to say it, straight size or a smaller bodied fitness professional, do you ever feel like you get a little bit of the up and down look, or a little bit of the side eye, or a little bit of an "Oh, that's cute" kind of thing? And how do you respond to that?

Louise: Well, I feel like I don't get it as much anymore because I have a track record of this is what I do, this is what I specialize in, this is what I'm exceptionally good at. But before I would want to avoid even telling people I

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was a trainer because I couldn't bear it. It was something I wanted to avoid because I would just get the look like, "Oh," you know, that "Good for you. That's so cute."

Jill: Yes.

Louise: Where you're not taken seriously or, like I said, a lot of hate. I get a lot of hate mail. Especially when I do like any kind of media where a lot of people see it, I typically always get the muscle bound, you know, you're ridiculous. A lot of hate.

Jill: Isn't that fascinating? Because I always wonder what's behind that. Like why are you so mad that I'm out here trying to help people? What is the problem? What is the thought that they have? Do they feel threatened? Do they feel like, "Oh gosh, if the secret gets out that you can be fit and fat, then all of their marketing goes away?" Why are people so upset about it? I just don't understand.

Louise: I think it's fat phobia and I think it's who does this fat woman, first of all that I'm a woman, and secondly, I'm fat, who does she think she is speaking up, basically.

Jill: Yeah, because if you're fat and you're a woman, you need to just be quiet and go sit in the corner and let the adults deal with everything. And so, as we're talking about this I'm thinking, so you and I are fitness professionals. We're deliberately putting ourselves in the public eye, we're ready for it, we can handle it.

But imagine what it's like to be, and we've both been there, to be a fat woman showing up to a 5K training course that's in person, and everybody else is thinner. And like having those kind of like sideways looks, or the like,

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“Oh, good for you. You're going to do great.” And not being mentally prepared for what that feels like, how upsetting that must be and just how overwhelming.

And it's no wonder that there's such a— I don't know what the word is, but like when everybody joins the gym on January 1st, and like two weeks later the gym is right back to normal because all those people— And I don't think it's that people are lazy or not committed. I think that they show up there and they're intimidated, and there's no space for those folks to feel like they belong. And when you don't feel like you belong, you're like, “I'm going to get the fuck out of here. I'm going to go someplace else.” Right?

Louise: It starts in the marketing message.

Jill: Yeah.

Louise: If people saw themselves in the marketing message, like, “Hey, there's a woman that looks like me on the treadmill running. This gym actually thinks I can run and they're probably going to support me to do so. And that's an unspoken invitation for me to go into the gym.”

But when 99.9% of the marketing representation that's associated with fitness culture is 20 something Caucasian, ripped abs woman, well how is a 55 year old plus size woman going to feel going into that space?

Jill: Yeah, that's such a great point. And you touched on that a lot during the size-inclusive fitness specialist training. Like what gym spaces can do and what public fitness spaces can do to make themselves more inclusive.

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Because, yeah, I've belonged to a lot of gyms in my life and I can't think of a single one where I saw a picture on the wall of a plus size person doing anything other than talking to a trainer and looking really tired.

Louise: Yeah. Or I recently have been trying to get my course accredited. So I've been looking at a lot of education sites, and always the plus size person is for the weight management program. Or they are for the medical assist program or lack of mobility program. You never see this person as an empowered, fit, able bodied person. You never do.

Jill: Yeah, that has got to change.

Louise: Unless you go to your website, or my website, or Ross's website.

Jill: Right, it's so true. So, I mean, if there's any non-larger body fitness professionals listening right now, there might be, what would you like to say to them if they're curious about how to create a more inclusive environment for their clients, for themselves?

Louise: Well, there is a very in depth learning process to this, especially if you don't have the lived experience. And so I basically schooled myself for 15 years in my own business doing that. I'm not saying take my course, although it is a great course.

Jill: It is a great course.

Louise: But do some education around it and talk to individuals who live in larger bodies. But you're not just walking up to them on the street, but say you have a friend or, "Hey, can I ask you some questions to help me better understand your lived experience? And what's it been like for you going

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into health and wellness spaces? What what's that been like? What is it like when you go into an exercise class with a bunch of other people?"

Like really dig deep and probe the situation so that you can educate yourself because so many trainers don't understand the lived experience where that person faces weight bias on almost a daily basis. They are always being undermined by how they look in some regard, whether it be ability in physicality or even when they go shopping.

Somebody recently told me that they walked into a store and the person said, "We don't have anything here that will fit you." You know, just always looking at that person in a way that they are devalued. Whether it's micro or macro aggressions people experience, there isn't one larger bodied person that I know that has not faced that.

Jill: Yeah, I'm the same. I mean I love those, they're all great points. And I would add also be open to the possibility that you don't know everything about what it's like to be a plus, be open to the possibility that there are things about being a plus sized person that plus sized folks just compensate for that. And it's not something that if you've gone your whole life being thinner, there are things that a plus sized person goes through that you would never even think of, it wouldn't even ever occur to you.

And so be open to hearing that lived experience. Like walking into a restaurant and thinking, "Okay, well I better not ask to sit in a booth because I probably won't be able to fit in that booth." That's like when you are a larger body person in a smaller size world, you're constantly scanning for that.

So like going into a gym and thinking like, "Oh gosh, those treadmills are really close together. I might actually be too close to the person next to

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me.” I think there's so much that larger bodied folks just deal with silently and maybe don't even discuss with each other.

It's like when you're a woman and it's late at night, you're constantly scanning the environment for a potential attacker. And it's not like I don't walk around to men and go, “Oh, it's really hard being a woman because I'm always like looking for when I'm going to be attacked.” Just mentally it's something I do. And as a larger bodied person, there's a lot of that that we go through as well.

And if you're a thin person, not necessarily a fitness trainer, but if you're a thin person and your best friend is larger bodied and wants to go work out with you or whatever, like exact same stuff applies. Don't just assume that your experience is the same, for sure.

Louise: It's very different. And especially in our fitness culture, it's not designed for larger bodied people. And that's what I'm trying to change is all of the points that you brought up about the spacing of equipment. I mean, we cover that all in the course. And there may have been some people that took that course that was like, “Jeez, I never even thought of that.”

Just the spatial difference in how a body moves. You can't deliver the same fitness to larger bodied people without having in your back pocket some variety of different ways that things can be done. And then, like you say, the plus sized person is always just left to kind of suck it up and deal with.

You know, how many times have I been in a fitness class where I see somebody in the corner just trying to do their own thing because they aren't being given a modification or they're not being given an alternative. So they're just kind of like, “Well, I'll just make this up on my own.”

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So how hard is it for them to go to the gym in the first place, when they don't see themselves represented? They don't see that visual invitation. They don't see the program cater to them whatsoever. So they're doing their own thing. And so when trainers don't know how to deal with that person, they often just pretend that they're not there.

Jill: Yes, oh my gosh. And then you're left to figure it out on your own, quit, possibly get hurt, and probably not come back. Like Orangetheory Fitness, CrossFit. I'm thinking of all the things that I've signed up for in the past, went in, and the trainer was not really ready or able to assist me.

And I'm not even, I mean, I'm a larger bodied person, but I'm a pretty fit person as well. And still, going to things like this and thinking, "Oh wow, if I didn't have a personal trainer certification of my own, I wouldn't know how to modify this movement and I wouldn't be coming back."

And so we can't expect everyone to go out and educate themselves on the modifications. That's why you go to a gym, that's why you pay a trainer. And so I think there's a missed opportunity for a lot of trainers and fitness professionals. And also, it's just embarrassing and awful the way they're so uncomfortable around larger bodied people. I'm like we don't have cooties. We're just humans like everyone else.

Louise: That's because they don't have the training or the experience, and it makes people feel like they don't know what to do.

Jill: Yeah.

Louise: So then it creates that awkwardness.

Jill: Yeah. Yeah, I could not agree more.

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So let's talk about, I kind of want to talk about weight bias in general, and admit that even still, after 20 years of doing this work on myself, I still find myself with weight bias in my own mind, towards myself. It kind of is amazing to me that weight bias is so pervasive in our society that even as a fat person, there are days when I look at myself in the mirror and think like, "Why are you so fat?"

And, I mean, I don't know if you struggle with the same thing. And it's not every day, like most days I look at my butt and I'm like, "You're amazing." But there are still days, right? And so I think it's kind of important to recognize that too, is that nobody expects you to suddenly wake up and be like, "I'm so in love with my fat body." So I was wondering if you could kind of share your experience and your journey in that area?

Louise: Well, I think it takes a lot of unpacking. As you say, it's decades. And although you're way further ahead than you were before, it's still 20 years. And same with me, there are days—

And it's funny, I'm writing an article right now about the evolution of bodies. And I'm turning 50 and menopause is on the horizon, and things are changing. And I'm pissed off, I want to remain this 40-ish kind of person, right? But it's not happening, our bodies evolve.

And the reason that we're so not accepting of it is because of the perpetual messaging and representation that we see of women. If we saw more, women— Aging is not embraced like it is in a lot of cultures, where it's a rite of passage and its wisdom and where the rest of the community go to the elders because they know. We don't have that in our Western culture. It's like hide those wrinkles, get the Botox, don't get fat, and dye your hair.

Jill: Yeah.

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Louise: You know, nobody can see you age. And if you're injured, then you're defective. It's just this really backwards sense of what we should be and what we should do.

So yes, I battle with it too. And I am aging, right? 50 is kind of that age where it's like, "Okay, I'm still really active and I'm grateful for the body that I have and still able to do a lot of things. But, man, I'm tired. My energy's not where it used to be and that's part of it. And I think that I'm unpacking stuff through all the stages of my life.

Like after I had my son, I had to unpack a lot of stuff too. I wish I could have been able to look at my post baby body and been like, "What a miracle, I just had a human being." But I was out there running trying to bounce back. And it's like there is no bounce back after a baby. You've had a baby, the body has evolved.

Jill: Yeah.

Louise: There is no bounce back after menopause, you've gone through menopause, it's evolved. So we just have to get more in that mindset of the body is evolving. And it's something that I have to work on all the time too.

And so I will sometimes get these thoughts, this narrative like, "Oh, you should be able to X, Y, or whatever." And then I have to counter that. I'm far enough in the journey where it's like, "No." It's like two people live up there where I'm having this conversation all the time.

But like you say, it's not every day. It's not even close to multiple times a week, but there are times or periods of time where I go through this space where I'm like, "What is up with you? Just relax and stop being so

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hardcore.” I think that's a great word for women. We're pretty hardcore on ourselves.

Jill: Yeah, we really are. And I think for me the thing that has helped you the most has been every time I hear negative self-talk come up in my brain now, I used to think like, “Oh my god, what's wrong? Why am I thinking this thought? This is a terrible thing to think.” So not only would I be judging my body, then I would be judging myself for judging my body.

And now I'm just like, “Oh, of course you think that thought, you've practiced it for 40 years.”

Louise: Yeah, compassion.

Jill: Compassion really helps and it doesn't mean that anything has gone wrong that I still have negative thoughts about my body. I'm like, “Of course I still have negative thoughts about my body.” And menopause, oh my gosh, totally threw me for a loop. I was just like, “What is happening? Nothing is the way it used to be.”

And I had to have a lot of compassion for myself through menopause because it seems like every day, you're like, “Oh, all right, well, I guess we're doing this now. Okay, I guess we're going to have hot flashes. Oh, I guess we've got a lot of gray hair. Oh, I guess we've got this.” And it was like all the things that I struggle with thinking, “Oh my gosh, I'm so old. I'm old and dried up and useless.”

And I had to do a lot of work on that. And have just recently come to the point where I'm so fucking tired of dyeing my hair every three weeks, that I've just decided to let the gray come in. And every day I look in the mirror, I see the gray hair. And I'm like, “All right, what do you want to think about

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the gray hair today? What do you want your gray hair today?" But yeah, it's a process. It is such a process.

So a couple more questions I guess that I have, because this has been a really fun conversation. But when you have people that come to you and say, and maybe it's emails that you get, whatever, and they're like, "If you exercise so much, how come you're not thin?" How do you respond to that? Or do you even get those emails?

Louise: I haven't had that for a long time, I don't think. But I think I don't respond to them. I don't need to get into the physiology or my genetic history or anything that is kind of my personal health information.

And I'll just say this plain and simple is that this is not calories in calories out. Which is what so much of our industry wants, "Well, all you have to do is eat less and move more." That's all the advice is from most doctors.

Jill: Yeah.

Louise: You know what you need to do? You need to lose some weight, and you need to eat less and move more. And so that's a calories in, calories out model. And I've seen all kinds of doctors in my search of what's wrong with my body. And it's a heck of a lot—

There's nothing wrong with my body, A. And B, there's a hell of a lot going on in somebody's physiology that determines body weight. And so it doesn't really matter what I do because I've tried. Literally I've tried thousands of things and I always weigh the same.

Sometimes my body will look slightly different, depending on the type of training I'm doing. And people will be like, "Oh, you've lost weight." And I

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don't like that either. But I actually have never lost weight. I am always the same weight.

Jill: Isn't that fascinating?

Louise: It's so bizarre.

Jill: Yeah.

Louise: It's so bizarre, I am always the same weight no matter what.

Jill: And I think that's an important lesson for anybody listening to hear, is that the number on the scale doesn't really tell you a ton of information. It's like one tiny little data point. But you do a lot of heavy lifting. So what's it like to— Do you go through seasons of your— Well, do you do competitive lifting? Do you compete sometimes?

Louise: Well, I'm trying to, but I've had a couple of injuries. So the goal is to lift for competition in the masters of Olympic lifting. But I have not yet done that.

Jill: Okay. But that's like a seasonal activity where you're going to be probably shifting what you eat to support muscle gain, right? And so your body's going to look different ways during different seasons of that. And I think it's so fascinating. You're like, "I'm always the same number on the scale. And my body changes within that."

Louise: Yeah, sometimes I may appear leaner, but I always weight within a five pound range, I'm always the same no matter what. And when I do go to heavy lifting, and when I was training for competition, I was eating tons of

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protein to build muscle. And so, in theory, you should be heavier. Right? I should be heavier, but I'm always the same.

Jill: Right. Oh, that's so fun. And what has that kind of lifting done for your confidence? And for your body image? Because I find it to be a super empowering activity to lift heavy shit. And the heavier I can lift, the more I look at my body and I'm less concerned with the size of my body, and more fascinated with the power of my body.

Louise: Yes, I think exactly. I used to be very much into endurance and running and triathlon. And I started doing this class that was on Sunday mornings at this gym I went to, and it was called the warrior class. And they started to do some like just little bits of Olympic lifting in it. So like snatching a little bit. And I was like, "What is this? I love this." And so I feel very empowered, I feel very strong. and very confident.

Unfortunately, this year I've had a couple of injuries that have set me back. And I fell off a galloping horse eight weeks ago. So I fractured my sacrum so I have been healing that. And the week before I did that, I sprained my ankle so badly. So it's like I feel like I've just— I think the world was trying to tell me to slow down.

Jill: Yeah.

Louise: So I'm coming back. I just had my first session back in the gym with a new trainer. We're working on the lifts and just building back the strength. And within one session I'm like, "Okay, there I am." Because when I'm not moving, my mental health isn't well.

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I don't bide well with just sedentary living. And so I've been doing hot yoga but I haven't been lifting the weight that I want to be lifting. And just that one session, I walked out, I felt like I was just on fire.

Jill: Aw, that's such a good feeling. I mean, for anybody who hasn't really tried strength training and given lifting heavy things, and when I say strength training, I mean really picking up some heavy shit and slinging it around. It is just the most satisfying, empowering feeling ever.

Okay, so the last question I have for you is, can you tell us a little more about the size inclusive fitness professional class? Who's it for? Is it for only fitness professionals? Or is it for anybody who wants to learn this stuff? And how can folks get in on that?

Louise: So it is intended for fitness professionals, but there's so many more people that can benefit from it. And people that have signed up are from a different range of professions and some are just personal interest. So we've had people that focus on health at every size therapy and counseling take it so that they understand better the lived experience of what people are dealing with.

And we've had people that are thinking about becoming a trainer, they've taken it, and trainers, and coaches. So they may not be specifically a personal trainer, but maybe a run coach. I think that's really the range of people that we've had.

But anybody that works with somebody that has a larger body, that that person is going to either recommend exercise or they're going to deliver exercise. Physiotherapists, it would be suitable for those type of people.

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Jill: I love that. I love that so much. And how does it work? Is it a full weekend?

Louise: So it is a two day course over a weekend.

Jill: Okay.

Louise: We may be offering something that's four Wednesday nights soon, where people don't have to give up a whole weekend. We're going to do a module each week. But right now it is a full weekend. The next one is October 23rd and 24th, I still have two spots.

And yeah, we're just going to keep launching it. It eventually will be a self-paced course that you can just buy and do on your own. But I do think that doing it with the group, there's a lot of discussion and there's a lot of connection in that where I think it'll be a richer experience.

Jill: Yeah, I really, really enjoyed that class. I've lived in a larger body my entire life and I still learned so much because I think I learned how to step outside of my own thoughts and my own experience and just kind of be open to the experiences of others. And it was really, really powerful.

So how can people find out more about you, follow you, or find out more about the course, or any of your other online programs? Because I know you've got a lot of stuff.

Louise: Probably the best way is to go to Instagram to Louisegreen_bigfitgirl and then in the link, it's got a link tree with everything I offer.

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Jill: Oh good. Okay. Okay. And so there's a class coming up later in October, and then will there be another one shortly after that? When would the next one be?

Louise: There will be one in November, the dates have not been in. I'm working on dates now.

Jill: Okay, great. Because this podcast will come out in a week or so. And so I just want to make sure people know that there's going to be another one coming up soon, because I have a feeling that you're probably going to have at least a couple people who are listening think, "Oh, that class is for me." So, yeah, all right.

Well, thank you so much for joining me today. Is there anything—

One question that we didn't cover is when you think about a larger bodied person who wants to get started with fitness. Oh, this is a whole rabbit hole that I kind of wanted to go down too. First of all, where would you start? Like a larger bodied person that's never really exercised, what would you suggest as far as a starting point?

Louise: I think it depends on the individual. But a lot of my clients have started with my fitness app or an app that's similar, like Let's Join or there's a lot of size friendly apps out there. And they like to do it at their home, because it's private for one, and it's geared towards their body and the trainers look like them.

And then once people have built a bit of confidence, they feel like, "Okay, I have a bit of fitness, now I'm going to go into a gym space. And a lot of my clients have done that. So now they've moved into a gym space. And I

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always say to try to seek out gym spaces that you see some indication that they are trying to be size inclusive.

So you can look for keywords like body positive or health at every size, or no one gets left behind. You know those keywords where you can probe a little further and do your homework. So call ahead. It's okay to interview gyms. It's okay to interview trainers. And ask the questions.

I know often people when they're just starting out, and a lot of people in larger bodies feel like they're at a disadvantage when it comes to talking to health professionals just because of the way that we have this hierarchy in health where people that may not be deemed as healthy, somewhat feel less valuable.

But it's like you're hiring somebody to fix your car or clean your gutters, there shouldn't be any kind of hierarchy in that experience. You are the CEO and you get to interview them and say, "If I need modifications, can you give me an example of what a couple of those might be? Do you have experience working with somebody in larger bodies? Do you have experience working with somebody in a larger body that actually has no interest in losing weight?"

Design what's important to you and then create a list of four or five questions around what your health vision is. And then do the due diligence and ask for it. And if they're not willing to play ball with you in that, then move on.

Jill: Yeah, I love that. And if you live in a place where there's not a ton of gyms that you can interview, that's totally fine because there's so many trainers that work online.

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Louise: Yeah.

Jill: My personal trainer lives in Queens and we still work together twice a week. And I get a ton of value out of that. So just because you don't have a lot of options in your town doesn't mean that you can't interview a bunch of online trainers and get it another way.

But I love that, just create a list of questions that matter to you. Like all the things that you're thinking, "I'm a little scared about this," those are the questions you should be asking. And your driver's seat. They want your money.

Louise: 100%.

Jill: So make sure they're worth it.

Louise: They work for you. It's just like I said, you know, a mechanic and we don't go into a mechanic thinking that— Well, we do sometimes, thinking that they know way more than us. But there isn't this hierarchy that tends to be there when we're talking about health.

Jill: Yeah, exactly. Thank you so much, that was such a great answer. So okay, Louisegreen_bigfitgirl on Instagram. And if you go there, all the links are there. And then also, what's your website?

Louise: It's bigfitgirl.com.

Jill: I love this, okay. So yeah, so you guys please check out Louise. She's got so much to offer. If you're interested in the size inclusive fitness course, definitely check that out. I can highly, highly recommend it. Thank you so much. It's been a pleasure to have a great conversation with you today.

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Louise: Thank you. Thank you so much.

Oh, and one last thing, if you enjoyed listening to this episode you have to check out the Rebel Runner Roadmap. It's a 30 day online program that will teach you exactly how to start running, stick with it, and become the runner you've always wanted to be. Head on over to rebelrunnerroadmap.com to join. I'd love to be a part of your journey.