

[Transcript] Mamamia Out Loud / How Helicopter Parents Broke A Generation

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Mamma Mia Out Loud!

Hello and welcome to Mamma Mia Out Loud.

It's what women are actually talking about on Wednesday, the 21st of June.

I'm Holly Wainwright.

I'm Claire Stevens.

And I'm Mia Friedman and I'm back, baby.

You're back! How was your holiday?

I had a great time.

Out Louders, this is the cast you're going to be hearing in your ears for the next few months.

Since Claire has taken Jesse's seat, Mia is back with a slight caveat that tomorrow I'm going on holiday.

And then I'm going away for just for a couple of days!

Very, very quickly.

And then this is your team.

This is your 2023 team.

Was Europe fabulous?

It was.

You're all glowy.

You know I have a complex relationship with holiday.

You do.

You hate travelling.

I had a lovely time very, I don't want to say romantic.

But it was the first holiday that Jason and I have taken just together in, I don't know, 20 something years.

So it was really nice.

Except because I missed this and I kept trying to engage him in out loud style debates over dinner.

Oh he didn't want it.

Didn't work.

That's not a Jason thing.

Jason, I can't believe that Elizabeth Gilbert cancelled her book.

He's like, I need to know more about it.

Before I can offer an opinion how it works.

You need to be on my level.

It is so good to have you back.

And on today's show, why we're all completely obsessed with the fate of five people stuck at the bottom of a very deep, very cold ocean.

Plus, since Mia is back, I need to have a chat with her about her viral cover story for Mama Mia. Blaming helicopter parents for all that's wrong with the world.

And the latest celebrity to say something silly about food and why they should just stop doing it.

Enter Rebel Wilson, but first.

In case you missed it, I need to calm down, but I won't because I've been up since 5.30, not with jet

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lag,

but strategising about how to get Taylor Swift tickets for her Australian tour, which was announced today.

Taylor's coming next February.

She's doing two shows in Melbourne and three in Sydney, and I am ready for it.

So people need to strategise, right?

Because when she launched her tickets in America, it broke the internet.

It did.

And she copped a lot of grief about that, even though it probably wasn't really her fault.

And so if you want to go to Taylor, you need to be super organised for next week, right?

You do.

Do you have like an itinerary?

I do.

Before gaming it, as I said, since 5.30, I can't tell you how many people are involved.

How many tickets can one person buy?

Four.

Oh, that.

Okay, that's tricky.

That's tricky.

Second question is, for those of us who are not obsessed with Taylor like you, but would quite like to go as like a cultural experience, and my daughter's like, oh yeah, quite like Taylor, that'd be fun.

Should we just get out of the way and leave it to the Swifties?

I would say, step down.

Yeah.

Just leave it to us.

I hope that a Swifty gets sick before and then we can pick up one of the tickets.

Or hope that my strategising works and I've accidentally got 20 tickets.

And then I could have some.

And I'll say some from you.

Then you could buy some.

Of course, buy.

Not expensive gift.

They're going to be very expensive.

Then you can buy some for me at only an increase of 50% over the price that I paid.

How much are we talking generally?

Ballpark.

So top of the range is, well, if you buy the packages, which are like, you get a glass of something and you get a print.

Exactly.

Exactly.

They're like in the thousands, but the A reserve seats are about \$350.

Wow.

And I think it goes down to the cheapest tickets or I think around 100.

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I think it's worth everything.

I think it will be incredible.

I've got to jump on somebody else's bandwagon.

I don't have the enthusiasm, but I will show up if someone organizes my ticket.

Oh my God.

You don't have any enough commitment.

You don't deserve to see Taylor.

Well, just watch it on TikTok.

A desperate search underway for a tourist submersible, which has gone missing near the wreck of the Titanic.

It is a challenge to conduct a search in that remote area.

There could have been an accident.

It could have been entangled in the wreckage of Titanic.

It could indeed have had a catastrophic failure.

The answer is we don't know just yet.

As we're recording this, five people are currently lost at sea at the site of the Titanic wreck in a submersible called the Titan.

The vessel, which is about the size of a minivan, lost contact one hour and 45 minutes into its dive on Sunday morning.

And it dives with a four day emergency supply of oxygen, which means they have until about Thursday to find this sub.

However, that's affected by the breathing rate of the people on board.

So if they're panicking, it could be less.

As we're recording this, there's news that Sonar has detected potential tapping sounds implying crew may be alive and signaling.

The sub is meant to descend to the Titanic wreckage, which takes about two hours, then spend a few hours exploring and then take another couple of hours to surface.

It's not intended for multi-day use.

And it's likely that whatever's gone wrong here, it's dark and cold and uncomfortable for the people on board.

The Titan sub is a research vessel that can carry five people.

Usually that's a pilot and then anyone from archaeologists to marine biologists to tourists who happen to be able to afford the experience.

How much is it?

\$365,000 Australian dollars.

And so on board, there's a British businessman and aviator, Hamish Harding.

There's a Pakistani businessman and his teenage son, a French explorer, the CEO of the company that operates the vessel.

And at this point, no one knows what's gone wrong, but there are theories that it's become tangled in the wreckage of the Titanic, which would make it really hard to find.

And I didn't realize where the Titanic is in a trench, like an ocean trench.

So it's even deeper and they're very worried because that would be very hard to find.

Or there's been a power failure or an issue with the sub's communication system.

And apparently the ocean floor even around the Titanic is full of debris and just really dangerous.

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Basically, it could be anywhere between the seabed and the surface.

And there are 13,000 feet between that.

So they're doing the surface.

They're doing the seabed.

They're doing all the ocean in between.

I am terrified at the prospect of actually finding these people.

Why?

Because I don't think it's looking good.

And they have families who are waiting for them.

And I don't think it's going to end well.

Holly, what do you think?

What's interesting about this is how obsessed everybody is.

And why?

Because last week we were talking about a horrendous incident here in Australia when a bus crashed on the way home from a wedding in Hunter Valley with a lot of loss of life.

And it's a story that obsessed Australia for several days.

Well, and ongoing.

And one of the reasons everybody was really obsessed with that story is because everybody has been in that situation.

It was a very relatable disaster.

And this is the opposite of that, right?

Because this is a situation that very few of us would ever find ourselves in.

And that's why it's fascinating too, right?

It is a story that kind of has everything.

It has very high stakes.

It has a ticking clock.

I know there are news outlets around the world who are putting a countdown clock on their coverage.

It's got ridiculously wealthy people doing things that we can judge them for doing if we feel like it and it plays into our worst fears, as you were saying.

I'm fascinated by the idea of who would go on this trip.

I read an article written by a journalist who did it.

And actually this journalist must have been this week he would have been the busiest man in media because he's been on that trip.

He was being interviewed by all the news outlets on exactly what it was like.

But in the piece he wrote about it, he made it sound like the vessel itself was co-designed with engineers from NASA and all the rest of it.

So it's very watertight and can withstand the pressure and all that.

But everything around it was a bit experimental because they've never really designed anything to go a passenger vessel to go down that deep before.

He had to sign something that said, among other things,

this experimental vessel has not been approved or certified by any regulatory body and could result in physical injury, emotional trauma or death.

So you had to sign that several times.

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He also said that the kind of people who go on it, because I was really interested in that, the owner says they've got clients who are Titanic enthusiasts, who they refer to as Titananiacs.

People who've mortgaged their homes to come and do the trip.

And we have people who don't think twice about that kind of cost.

We've had one man who won the lottery.

And there was a woman on this journalist's trip who tried to go three times because the weather conditions and everything have to be perfect for it actually to launch.

And she said, this woman, dreams don't have a price.

Some people want a Ferrari.

Some people buy a house.

I wanted to go to Titanic.

So James Cameron, who was the writer and director of Titanic, my favorite movie of all time, he has personally made 33 dives to the wreckage site. He's completely obsessed with it.

And he's on the record as saying he made Titanic, not because he particularly wanted to make a movie, but because he wanted to dive to the shipwreck.

And basically it was an excuse to do an expedition.

And he has been absolutely obsessed with it since he was a kid.

And he actually has quite a profound justification for why you'd go and see it.

And he says, you've got such limited time on this planet, you have to do something.

And if you should be fortunate enough to make some money and be able to do this, why not put it into seeing one of the wreckages?

Well, lots of super rich people do things like this.

You know, that's what the Voyager space missions are going to be about.

You get to pay money to go and hang around in the Earth's stratosphere for one.

I would pay money not to go to space.

I would pay money not to go in one of the ocean.

Other people go and shoot bears in Siberia and lions in South Africa.

And they go and do really extreme things that very, very few people can do and climb Everest.

That's also something that people do.

And I think it must just be something about if you've experienced a lot of all the things that life has to offer,

you would always want to be pushing that envelope a bit harder.

I've been trying to work out what it is about this that I'm finding so disturbing.

And I know I'm not alone.

It feels like a movie, but it's probably not going to end well.

Like in a movie, it would end well and they would be saved.

But the idea of the panic and the fear of being trapped in a small space with strangers and the man and his son

and knowing that the clock is ticking.

Like it feels very different if there'd just been a sudden accident and something had happened quickly.

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It's the knowing.

The imagining of what would they be talking about?

What would they be doing?

How would you live your last 90 hours?

Maybe there was an accident and they were killed straight away.

And please God, maybe they'll be rescued.

I don't know.

I just think it's tragic.

And somehow the idea that it's a billionaire as if it's kind of his fault.

Yeah.

Because those are real people with real families.

I mean, I do think that it is kind of relevant because the rescue effort, of course, would be enormous for anybody.

But they're going to try everything they can try to find these people if they can.

You're right, Mia.

Of course, it doesn't make any difference who they are to the fact that there are five souls down there and lots of family affected.

It's horrible.

It is a little bit disturbing.

I worry about this with news stories.

They call it What About Ism.

It happened a little bit with the Hunter Valley bus crash and people were like, well, people have died from COVID this week.

But there is a parallel story no one's reporting on.

Hundreds of refugees have died in a shipwreck off Greece.

And that's not getting reported on because the billionaires and the Titanic makes for a very clicky headline.

While I was away, my mum and me, a cover story, the first one that I've written called How Helicopter Parents Broke A Generation by a helicopter parent was published.

And it starts with an anecdote about a true story that happened a few weeks ago at a primary school where some children were kept inside over a lunchtime because a number of children had vandalised the toilets.

And the teachers were giving them a lecture about the need to respect public property, et cetera. Standard.

I think that might have happened to me.

Don't think I vandalised any toilets, but I remember being held back after class and maybe missing my lunch hour because someone had done something naughty.

Maybe it was me.

Maybe it wasn't me.

What happened in this case because it's 2023 is that on a Facebook page for the school, the parents went a little bit nuts, made all these threats against the teachers, made all these complaints that it was inhumane.

It was torture.

And the school was, you know, in the very familiar position of many schools and many teachers of

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having to explain themselves and having to defend themselves from attacks about the way that they wanted to treat their students.

I went on to sort of talk about this basic philosophy that I have that's not unique to me, but that we have accidentally raised a generation of kids who are now young adults and who have absolutely no idea how to live their lives without constant into future.

They have experience on their behalf, constant praise, constant positive feedback and saving them from any discomfort and also many participation awards.

And even though we are a generation of parents completely obsessed with our kids being resilient, like the big buzzword in parenting is I need my child to be more resilient.

We are the ones who've actually inadvertently demolished their resilience like a wrecking ball because it's not our fault.

We internalize the idea that our most important job and this is different from the sort of messages about parenting that our parents and grandparents got.

We were told that we needed to make sure our children never experienced a negative emotion like disappointment or boredom or frustration that their self-esteem was the most important thing that they never had to endure any inconvenience or feel a hunger pain.

So we always had snacks in our bags.

They always got participation awards.

And now these kids are growing up and their parents are still calling the school and sometimes a workplace now to intervene and complain about how their child who might be 23 is being treated. Holly, I know you have strong feelings about this, which I'm excited about because I've missed having a discussion and a debate.

I think it's time we finally have it out because I gave it to you to edit because I always give you my stuff to edit.

And you said, it's great. I have some very different opinions, but we shall discuss this on the show. Bring it.

So I do want to say first of all that Mia's cover story, I recommended it on Friday. It is absolutely brilliant.

So let's get that on the table. Don't like to give me a praise. We all know that she doesn't like it either. She always gets really uncomfortable.

I also share a lot of the Generation X eye rolling about this. So there's plenty in there that I've fully agreed with.

And Claire Stevens, I would also welcome your input, of course, as somebody from a different generation.

I don't know if your parents are helicopter parents.

OK, they, my parents act like boomers. That's all I'll say. So they have boomer vibes.

They're young boomers.

Yeah, I think they're young boomers. So I don't think...

They're not helicopters.

I've been helicopter parented, but...

And they also are teachers, which I think also makes a difference.

Exactly. So number one, parents get too much shit. They get blamed for everything all the time.

And now we are responsible for entirely ruining the entire world.

And I might posit that there might be other forces that have ruined the entire world.

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Like maybe tech companies who profit from fear mongering and judgment and pitting us all against each other as if we're in some kind of competition.

Please discuss.

Oh, come on.

I mean, I'd love to blame the tech companies, but the irony that I think is so hilarious is that we're the ones that I roll and say, oh, this generation, they're too soft and snowflakes.

But we're the ones that did it.

But is that because, and we know how we've talked before about the rise of like,

is that because it's like an inevitable result of lots and lots of people, middle class people going to therapy and learning how badly their parents fucked them up allegedly.

Whereas the boomers didn't know that because there was only a very few people who wrote those kind of books and listened to that kind of stuff.

And so they were like, I just got dealt this hand and I deal with it.

Whereas we're all like, I'm this way because my parents made me this way.

And now I'm petrified of what I'm going to do to my child.

I think you're right.

And I think the major turning point was when parent went from being a noun to being a verb.

So parent was something that our parents were not something that they actively did.

The way that we were parented in the 70s and probably the 80s basically was fairly loose.

I think you could probably call it benign neglect.

And it was just, you know, kind of do what you want, just sort yourself out.

You know, I'm certainly not in this advocating for abuse or actual neglect.

Something our parents used to say to us all the time growing up was sticks and stones can break my bones, but words can never hurt me.

Or names can never hurt me.

Which isn't true.

But anyway.

They can't hurt you as much as a stick or a stone.

And you and I argue about this all the time.

I disagree.

This is a generation that says...

Emotional abuse is just as bad as physical abuse.

But we're not talking about abuse.

We're talking about the fact that if someone calls you a name,

I know that that can actually stick and cause you to internalize ideas about yourself.

I get that.

But the basic idea without being literal is that there will always be dickheads in the world.

Bad things will always happen to you.

As your parent, I can't protect you from all of those things.

So you have to work out a way of surviving those things and being resilient.

That's all they were telling us, right?

Now, someone calls your child a name.

You are on the phone to the school.

I was recently away with my parents, both of whom are teachers.

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And I have always been a little bit skeptical about this idea that you're talking about me. Because I managed a team of 20 people, a lot of whom were Gen Zed, and I didn't see this. I didn't get phone calls from parents. I saw some really hardworking people who every now and then they'd advocate for something and I thought, I could learn something from you. I should actually be more like you. But...

I'm not saying they're not hardworking and I'm not dissing an entire generation. I'm just saying the resilience is missing. I'm still doing it to my teenage and grown-up children. But what I'm interested in is why. So anyway, let's finish your thought, Claire. So I was away with my parents and my dad showed me an email from a parent and it had no names on it or anything like that. But it was in response to a request for this child to get a haircut. And this letter read like a legal letter that essentially said it was wrong and discriminatory for the school to request that this child get a haircut and how dare they not take into account his specific circumstances because he actually wants his hair that way. And basically, yeah, it can be a rule, but not for my kid. And I looked at dad and just said, oh my god, like how do you not just go into bat and say, how can we have rules if they don't apply to everyone? And I said, is this a new thing? My parents have both been teachers for about 40 years. I asked, is this something that you've consistently seen and maybe technology has made it a little bit more in your face. And they said, absolutely not. This is recent years. There is something about advocating and arguing. And it's like this resistance to any kind of authority that I find interesting. And the fact that if a parent is not willing to trust the school or live in a world where their child has to listen and follow rules, simply- Or be disappointed, have consequences for their actions. If they're not willing to do that, then I think that sets a really dangerous- I think there's no question. Any teacher in the world will tell you. For me, there's a special place in health for parents who go and win teachers all the time. So I'm fully on board with this. Don't do that. Although I don't like the hair. Refer to an earlier episode about me complaining about schools telling kids to get their hair cut. You should see my son's hair. Totally. Disgrace it, continue.

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Anyway, so I don't doubt for a minute this is real.
But what I'm interested in is why.
Because when I look up the way that I feel about it,
I was definitely raised by very typical parents of my era like you were Mia.
My parents had no idea what I was doing.
All my teenagers, they still don't.
They have no idea, right?
And I now have a daughter on the brink of that.
And I am constantly in a conflict with myself about how involved or not involved to be.
But without question, one of the biggest drivers of my parental style,
and as much as I have one, is the fear of judgment of other parents.
And my parents didn't have to worry about that.
And my grandparents didn't have to worry about that.
Many other parents they were exposed to were the neighbors and their family.
Whereas we parent in the glare of intense judgment at all times
because of the internet and social media.
So that's a cop out.
Because what's that got to do with the fact that we are constantly saying to our children,
I do it myself.
Good listening, great drinking.
But back to that.
Would you like a snack?
What would you like for dinner?
These are specific examples, but they're all linked to a similar thing, right?
So I think one of the things about why parents are always so worried about judgment.
So for example, if I'm quite less so fair about a teacher telling my kid off,
which I totally am, like I very much believe that teachers have a hard job.
They can do what they want within the boundaries of like,
please not physical abuse, maybe not name calling, racism, etc.
But you're in charge of my kids when you're at school.
I'm not complaining about that, right?
That's fine.
But you talk to a friend about that and they're like,
oh my God, I had to call the school because they did it.
And then you're like, oh my God, I must be a terrible parent because I ain't going to fuck one or not.
Like there's this endless judgment and comparison culture that has infiltrated everything
and the parenting massively has infiltrated.
So I don't doubt that it's real.
The thing about the good drinking, point number two, self-esteem.
We are obsessed with building self-esteem.
Again, this is a therapist thing.
So I'm blaming the rise of mainstream therapy for this,
but we're obsessed with building self-esteem.
But I would argue that particularly in girls, this is not a bad thing.

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It is not a bad thing that there is now a generation of young women who are refusing to be exploited, sexually harassed or discriminated against and not just suck it up.

I would argue that's great.

When I see the young people be like...

I'm not going to say, oh, I think they should be exploited and sexually harassed.

No, but you know, I think it's that thing of like sometimes,

and I'm not necessarily accusing you of this, Mia, of course,

but like sometimes people who love to bang on about the snowflake generation

just don't like getting stood up to by people who they used to be allowed to ignore,

like young women and various other people who they used to be able to treat like shit and nobody cared.

And now those people give them feedback and they don't like it.

So they're like snowflakes, too sensitive.

Mia, I think sometimes it's a cloak.

My point, though, Hol, is not being critical of the younger generation.

It's holding up a mirror to ourselves and going,

hang on a second, you know, all those participation awards,

all of the stuff that I say, the fact that you've now got parents

who are trading tips on how to buy fake ID for their children.

Like, where's the best place to source little Johnny some fake ID

because he wants to go to the pub.

Happy hour is from four to six.

Is there alcohol in this?

Oh, God, honey, no.

What kind of mother do you think I am?

Why do you want a little bit?

Because if you're going to drink, I'd rather you do it in the house.

That's the extreme.

And I would think no offense.

There are parents who aren't doing that.

However, what I thought while reading this article,

and it was absolutely brilliant.

Guys, you don't have to say that.

But you can think something is brilliant

without also endorsing everything in it.

But the thing I had, and there was actually a comment on it that echoed this,

which was you're being very hard on yourself, Mia,

because you have three pretty remarkable kids.

You do?

And I look at your daughter in particular,

and I am in awe of her.

And all I wish is that I had been more like her when I was growing up.

So I think the point we're making is that there are some positive things about this.

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Yes, I think that I think the confidence that your daughter has.
Well, good sleeping.
Good sleeping.
Like, I think that that has actually played a role.
But only one of my children has been let loose in the world so far.
And again, this isn't about my children.
No, no.
It's more about what I see in myself and the hypocrisy.
You know, like, so I was away, right, for a good couple of weeks.
And back to what you say about our technology, Holly, is true.
And the thing about helicopter parenting is that you create a generation of helicoptered children who don't know how to cut the cord.
I remember being six or seven, and my parents went away for six weeks.
And I stayed with relatives.
And once a week, they might call me for like 10 minutes.
I was in constant communication with all of my children when I was away, you know, multiple times every day on multiple mediums, FaceTime and texting.
We can literally see where our children are.
You can see them on the phone.
You've got to find my phone out and tracking family, sharing whatever.
Not only do we become used to seeing where they are and knowing everything that they're doing, but they become used to being supervised and used to us hovering.
And so the natural time that they're meant to break away.
So for example, college administrators in the U.S.
because they have a culture where a lot of people go and live in college campuses.
Parents are calling the college to say, you need to go and wake up my child in the morning because otherwise they won't get to class.
I just like sleep.
How will she know what to eat for dinner?
So that idea of independence and self-sufficiency, we're robbing our children of that.
If you want to make out loud part of your routine five days a week, we release segments on Tuesdays and Thursdays just for Mamma Mia subscribers.
To get full access, follow the link in the show notes and a big thank you to all our current subscribers.
What's your name?
Fat Amy.
Um, you call yourself Fat Amy?
Yeah, so twig bitch is like, you don't do it behind my back.
When are we going to stop taking food advice from celebrities?
Maybe when they stop giving it to us.
If you thought that Gwyneth Paltrow's debacle was a cautionary tale for famous people not to be so honest about what they eat, you haven't had a chat to Rebel Wilson lately.
The Australian actress has been talking about how she lost a significant amount of weight

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for a few years now.

In fact, she doesn't talk about it all the time,

but the thing is, is because she did talk about it after her year of health,

self-described year of health in 2020,

she gets asked about it in every interview and she talks about it sometimes.

A great number of stories have been written about Rebel's size and her body and her food since 2020, some with her cooperation, many without.

And this week, the Daily Mail ran an interview with her,

which was conducted at the launch of something completely different,

which is a dating app that she's launched called Fluid, because it's fluid.

She said,

I was just actually in a program where I learned about food

and they taught us that you don't really need as many calories as you think.

Everybody thinks that you need to eat so much in your body and your body needs it.

But the truth is, your body doesn't need a lot of calories

and I know that might sound crazy to some people,

but if you eat right and you eat small portions, you'll just be fine.

She went on to express exactly how many calories she was told we need

as opposed to what we think we need.

And I'm not going to say the number because A,

Wilson has denied that she was offering it up as specific advice

and who knows?

It reads like a verbatim interview, but maybe it was chat GPT, we don't know.

And B, it's against general good practice guidelines

to share numbers and details about calories, weights and diets,

and that is what I want to talk about.

Obviously, I support responsible reporting about food and diet

and Mamma Mia has a general policy that we don't run diet stories.

You won't click on Mamma Mia one day and see,

lose five kilos first, that's just not a world that we participate in.

But there is tension in me about refusing to acknowledge

that women are constantly talking about this stuff

and sharing this information.

We're constantly told not just by the media and social media and all that,

but also by medical professionals in our lives.

We're constantly being told to monitor weight, monitor what we eat,

lose weight, gain muscle, all those things.

And yet talking about doing that has become so taboo

that I kind of feel like we're leaving a bit of an open goal

for irresponsible diet advice from influential people

who really are just being honest about what it takes to look like they do.

Claire, is it okay for celebrities to talk about losing weight?

I get that it seems absurd to ask a public figure

who has undergone a significant physical change,

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not to acknowledge it and never to answer questions about it.
And we often talk about it with cosmetic procedures.
We talk about how it feels like gaslighting
when someone steps out with a totally new face
and then doesn't acknowledge that they've done anything.
But weight loss is so incredibly fraught.
And for most women, we've grown up in a world
where messages about body weight and shape
have seriously damaged both our mental and physical health.
You only have to look at the fact that we talk so much about weight loss
and yet on a population level for the last several decades,
we're only getting bigger.
So all the talk, all the diets, all the, this is how many calories you should eat,
all the anxiety isn't doing what it purports that it's trying to do.
And the thing that angers me is the conflation of weight and health.
So we have heard so much from Rebel Wilson about her year of health in 2020.
But from everything I've heard, it sounds like a year of weight loss.
And they are two different things.
Sometimes they can overlap, but they are not exactly the same thing.
But you can say that as a thin woman
who's never been told that she needs to lose weight for her health.
It's one of those things where they have something to do with each other.
They don't have everything to do with each other.
And we completely, completely conflate them.
And the fact is...
Do you think we conflate them or do you think that we've just tried to change the narrative?
And I know because I've been in a lot of these conversations
having worked in women's media and seeing this evolution over 30 years.
It used to be that you could just say the quiet part out loud.
When I first started at Clio, one of my first jobs was to work on the annual diet book.
And one of the diets was drop a dress size by Saturday, right?
And it was such a great seller and you would have worked to make it.
Oh my God.
All of that.
Right, so it covers.
Anytime there wasn't anything happening in the world,
you'd just go put a diet on there and it would sell.
Put a diet.
So then we started to understand in the late 90s and early 2000s
the impact that these diets had on women
and that they could cause eating disorders in some cases, etc., etc.
So then we corrected by saying,
let's not encourage women to lose weight so that they look good in a dress.
Let's encourage them for their health because there are some truths in that.

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There is some weight loss that correlates to health benefits.

Not all.

I agree with you.

So then we had to just change our language about it.

I think that the reason that that was done was with a view to be more responsible, but it's just kind of dishonest.

But the solution is to talk about healthy behaviors and not to talk about weight loss as an outcome in and of itself.

What if women actually just want to lose weight?

Actually, all the research shows healthy behaviors has a bigger impact on your health than just weight loss alone.

So there were all sorts of unhealthy ways to lose weight.

But my problem is, and this is what the Rebel Wilson story has touched on, the extent to which women in particular will sacrifice their quality of life for weight loss.

Because the fact is that if you are eating the amount of calories Rebel Wilson was talking about, it will severely impact your quality of life because you'll be exhausted.

You'll be hungry.

You'll be hungry.

You're not getting the right nutrients.

You're going to be sick all the time.

It's going to be awful.

And lots of diets have terrible side effects.

And lots of weight loss medication has terrible side effects, including the latest craze, Zempik, which we have to mention these days in any discussion about weight loss.

For some women, not all, for some people, it comes with some nasty side effects like nausea, various sort of gut related issues.

I can't tell you how many women I know, including myself.

Maybe it's a particular age group.

Maybe it's not who go into the doctor to get your bloods done about various things or to get checks up about various things.

And they will talk to you first and foremost about losing weight.

When we've talked about this on Out Loud before, we've had a massive outpouring from listeners who all relate to this.

Claire Murphy spoke about it really movingly last year.

Sometimes it feels like I went into the doctor with a sore toe and they told me to lose 10 kilos.

But other times it is stuff that is related to your diet and your health that would improve your health and your quality of life.

And they're telling you that no one wants to hear it and it's a difficult conversation.

I think one of the tricky things is pretending that it's not a conversation that women are having when it has always been a conversation that women are having is really difficult

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because we've talked about it a bit on the show,
but we're in a thin is in phase again, right?
We've talked about it a lot.
You look at the celebrities that we all see around us
and the influences on our apps and all those things,
they're getting smaller every time we look at them.
The Kardashians have almost disappeared.
And that's a fashion related, trend related, privilege related thing.
For a while there, curves were great, big bums, strong arms, all those things.
Now we're back to where we were in the early noughties,
which is if you want to be beautiful, be tiny.
So the women are shrinking on that sidebar of shame on the Daily Mail
as you were saying Mia, that they all look smaller and smaller.
And so it feels like the media and celebrities have been emboldened
to talk about this again.
But I would argue that the conversation has never really gone away
in like real women's lives.
They come out of the doctors or they're just feeling shitty about themselves
and they're saying to their friends, I want to lose weight.
I don't know how to do it.
How did you do it?
Oh, I did this, I did that.
Blah, blah, blah, blah.
You know, and I know lots of women who've had various medical interventions
to lose weight.
And now this medication like is included in that
and it's really helping them and it's really helping their lives and their health.
So I think it's really thorny about what's responsible and what's not.
Interestingly, I'd want to point out that's a generational thing.
I mean, obviously for all sorts of hormonal reasons, whatever.
But I do think there is something about women of my age.
I was talking to somebody in the office about it this morning.
You were in your early 30s.
Where, yes, where I don't think that's the conversation
and I genuinely think people are more focused.
The conversation at your age is more about children or not children and pregnancy.
Or fertility and health for fertility.
And so it's about exercising and eating well.
Let me tell you, that's a window in time.
In your 20s, in your teens, and in your 40s and beyond, it goes back to that.
And it's not good, but this is the society we live in that tells us
that women have more value if they are thin and it sucks.
But I think to pretend that we don't live in that world still,
that women don't want to lose weight for reasons other than just health,

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it's just false.

But the more we talk about it, the worse the issue gets.

I think the more you talk about it, you can surface these things.

What's that thing about the best disinfectant is sunlight,
except maybe bleach is better.

Because I think it's really positive, Claire, don't get me wrong,
that like we have moved on culturally from exclaiming.

Oh my God, you look amazing.

You've lost weight.

Like we have moved on from that.

We are rewiring our brains with smart about diet culture.

We know we've been sold a load of old shite, as you said before,
about how despite the enormous number of diet programs and weight loss foods out there,
in general, it's not working.

We're getting bigger.

So I think it's great that we've moved on from that
and we're like rewiring ourselves about it.

I think there is a reason why people are continually asking Rebel Wilson
and whoever else about how they did it.

And that's because women are asking that question all the time.

If you visibly lose weight,
your DMs will fill up with people going,
what did you do?

How did you do it?

Exactly what are you eating?

Exactly how long are you exercising?

It's depressing, but it's true.

Mia, you have a recommendation.

I did some reading when I was away.

It was so lovely to do that.

The only time I can really read books is when I'm on holiday.

And I read the most wonderful book.

It was called Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano.

It's about sisters and I'm obsessed with sisters because I don't have any.

I know you don't either.

Claire, you have one.

And this is a book about four sisters, two of whom are twins.

And it gave me some beautiful insights into twins.

There's love involved.

There's a catastrophic family rift that changes lives for generations.

The female characters are just so beautifully drawn.

It is tender and it's gorgeous and it's profoundly moving and it moves fast.

And it's about what happens when we choose to love someone,
not in spite of who they are, but because of it.

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And it's just gorgeous.
So highly recommend Hello Beautiful by Ann Napolitano.
And if you're looking for something else to listen to,
on yesterday's subscribe episode,
we helped an out loud a question of,
am I the problem in my career right now?
Which is really interesting.
An out loud a wrote in and said, is it me who's holding myself back?
And we kind of said, yeah, kind of.
Also, this is very exciting.
Now I won't be here for the first one because tomorrow I'm flying away to Borneo
to trek in the jungle.
With orangutans.
With orangutans, with Intrepid Travel,
who you've heard us talk about on the show.
I'm so excited.
I'm sure I'll be boring you with all that.
But what I am sad to be missing out on
is the fact that we are about to re-enter sex in the city season.
And just like that starts tomorrow night.
Out loud as I have had a sneak peek.
And I'm not gonna, of course I'm not gonna spoil,
but I am so busting to talk about this.
I can't even speak about how much I'm busting.
And we are going to be recapping every episode.
We're recapping every episode.
On Thursday, you won't have your normal subscriber episode
because it's going to drop on Friday.
So we are going to have recaps of and just like that,
dropping every Friday morning for subscribers.
So follow the link in the show notes
to make sure you don't miss out.
Thank you so much for listening to Australia.
I'm so happy to be back.
Oh, it's so nice to have you back.
And it's so good to have Claire at the table.
Yeah, guys.
I laughed and laughed about your...
I went into my holiday decline.
You know, I sometimes get my holiday depression.
And it's usually about two days for me to come home.
I just got all sad.
I don't know why.
I just sort of shut down.

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I got all homesick.
We were out on this boat in Italy.
And all I wanted to do was just listen to you guys.
In my ears, I just needed it.
So I listened to the proper episode
and I listened to your handover episode.
And I just chortled and chortled and I just felt restored.
I like how you're like Jesse was trying to overthrow you
with the getting rid of in case you missed it.
And Claire was like, no, I like it.
Oh, I like it.
It didn't work.
Nearly all the out louders I've seen comment agree.
They're like, keep it, keep it.
So anyway, welcome back me out.
Thank you for stepping in, Claire.
It's going to be great fun.
This episode was produced by Emily and Gazillas
and Susanna Makin with audio production by Leah Porges.
Bye.
Bye.
Shout out to any Mamma Mia subscribers listening.
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