[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Molly:** Welcome to Gender Reveal. A podcast where we ask intrusive personal questions and get a little closer to finding out what the hell gender is. I’m your host and resident gender detective, Molly Woodstock.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]

**Molly:** Hey everyone! Hope you’re doing okay out there. I am sick, which you can probably tell from my voice! This week on the show, I’m delighted to speak with Sonalee Rashatwar, who you may know from Instagram as The Fat Sex Therapist. Sonalee has a lot of smart and important stuff to say about race and bodies and sexuality and trauma and decolonization. But before we get to that, just a couple quick announcements, including an opportunity to win a free thing!

Okay first, I just want to say that this episode is dropping on my very own birthday! It would sure be an incredible gift to me if you took some sort of action to support the show. As you know, our entire budget comes from listeners just like you who donate to the show. So if you could throw in a few bucks to the Patreon or PayPal or Cash App, all of which are linked in the show notes that would be so great. And maybe even more importantly, you also know that we don’t really have like, a marketing department? The only way we promote the show is through y’all spreading the word. So if you could take a minute to get your friends subscribed to the show or to post about it on social media and tag us that would really mean a lot to me personally. Thank you so much.

Secondly, to celebrate the beginning of season three, we are giving away a free copy of Archie Bongiovanni’s book, “A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns.” Check out our Instagram, which is @gendereveal to learn how to win, and to see pictures of my cat!

Okay with that, it’s time for This Week In Gender.

[This Week in Gender theme music plays]

**Molly:** For once, this week in gender is actually about this week. This Sunday, December 16th, ninety-four contestants from all around the world will compete in the 2018 Miss Universe Pageant in Bangkok, Thailand. One of these contestants is Angela Ponce aka Miss Spain; who is the first openly trans woman to compete in the Miss Universe pageant.

In fact, trans women were barred from competing until 2012, when the rules were changed to allow openly trans women to compete. Guess who approved that rule change? [Jeopardy theme plays] Yup. Former Miss Universe owner and current global nightmare, Donald Trump. So, just to keep track, Trump *is* okay with trans folks in beauty pageants, but not okay with them serving in the military or otherwise existing in any way. So, not only is Miss Ponce *competing* in Miss Universe, she’s actually favored to *win* the Miss Universe title. In an interview with Time Magazine, she said that if she won, it would be a win for human rights. Quote, “Trans women have been persecuted and erased for so long,” she says. “If they give me the crown, it will show trans women are just as much women as cis women.”

Of course, there’s a lot to criticize about the Miss Universe competition. I mean for one thing, just like, all of the Donald Trump stuff. For another thing, let me read you part of the FAQ that currently exists on [MissUniverse.com](http://missuniverse.com) “Question: May I be married? Answer: No. Contestants may not be married or pregnant. They must not have been married, not had a marriage annulled, or given birth to or parented a child. The title holders are also required to remain unmarried throughout their reign.” Okay, so yes, Miss Universe has some weird garbage going on. And yes, having this one thin, white, conventionally attractive, extremely cis-passing woman won’t magically fix anything. But I still think it would be extremely rad and good if a trans woman who is explicitly competing on a platform of LGBTQ rights won an international competition about confidence and beauty and success in womanhood. And also, Miss Columbia said that trans folks shouldn’t be allowed to compete. So whatever happens on Sunday…I hope that bitch gets last place. This has been This Week in Gender.

[This Week in Gender theme music ends]

[Transition music plays]

Sonalee Rashatwar is an award-winning social worker, sex therapist and radical educator specializing in treating sexual trauma, body image issues, and sexuality and race-related issues. She is based in South Jersey and Philly. She is famous for her undying love of donuts and she has a cuddly gray cat named Rufus Dandelion. Please check the show notes for content warnings.

[Transition music ends]

So! The way we always start the show is in terms of gender, how do you identify?

**Sonalee:** Okay: nonbinary and bemme. So like butch and femme.

**Molly:** I’ve literally never heard that! Thank you so much for introducing this to me. Can you tell me about what bemme means then? It means butch and femme, why does that resonate with you?

**Sonalee:** Well I use bemme as opposed to futch because I lean a little more masc, at least right now and that feels authentic to me.

**Molly:** Did you used to identify as femme with an f?

**Sonalee:** Yes \*laughs\*

**Molly:**  So you had a lil’ gender journey?

**Sonalee:** I feel like I’m always on this gender journey. I feel like I’m always reflecting and part of that is like um. ... I mean, for anyone who’s like questioning and exploring and feeling fluid in any way, I’m always like, does this feel right to me today? Does it feel different to me today? I feel like my pronouns can shift especially in organizing spaces. Like sometimes instead of she/they, it’ll be they and she pronouns. And sometimes that feels significant too. Like, which one am I leaning towards heavier?

**Molly:** Yeah. In this moment, while we’re talking, do you have one you prefer?

**Sonalee:** I am going to be brave and say they/she.

**Molly:** Great. I love that! [Sonalee laughs] Happy to honor that. Um, so you told me that you came to understand your gender identity by accepting your fat identity and that those two things are directly related and I was hoping that you could tell us more about that.

**Sonalee:** My fatness and my gender identity have always been linked. And always also connected to my birth order. I grew up in the suburbs of New Jersey and being the oldest in an Indian family, especially the oldest daughter, there are a lot of responsibilities put on the oldest daughter that are very akin to as if I were a son. And the way that I was treated was substantially different compared to my younger sister who’s just two years younger but was much more slender and treated as delicate and frail and feminine in ways that I never was because of my fatness. And because of the way that fat on my body queered my body. So on my feminine presenting body, fat masculinizes me. And fat on a masculine body can feminize it in ways that a masculine person might not be consenting to. And fat on a nonbinary body or someone who’s trying to look androgynous might shift that in directions that that individual might not be intending.

And that’s not to say that I’m advocating for eating disorders. But, our fat definitely affects the way that folks treat us. Like, I’ll speak for myself. Um. My fat on my body made folks treat me like I didn’t belong inside of the narrow gender box for a feminine girl. And for me it made it easier to be like, “Alright well, if I don’t fit in the box, you know, so nicely and politely, then what else exists outside this box?” Like there’s so many things that I don’t have to confine myself into since I already don’t fit. Since I’m not allowed to fit.

**Molly:** Yeah. Absolutely. So you also said that gender identity and sexual orientation are supposed to be fluid, which we alluded to when you know, you’re always on a gender journey, but can you talk about why you feel like it’s *supposed* to be fluid?

**Sonalee:** I would say it’s supposed to be because so many factors influence the people that we become. So, my 9-5 work is in sexual trauma. I’m a social worker, I’m a clinician, and that means I’m a therapist. And I work with individuals who have experienced sexual trauma sometime in their lifetime. And I’ve worked with individuals who identify as cis women who might have felt like they have chosen to become bisexual or chosen to become what they would consider a lesbian because of their experiences of trauma. And to me, that affirms that there is this shifting that might happen throughout the lifespan because of what we have experienced. Not necessarily that everyone chooses their sexual orientation.

Some folks really live and die by “everyone chooses a sexual orientation,” some folks really live and die by “I was born this way.” I think, cool, that’s like, one way to affirm that that is how we receive and experience sexuality and gender. But that’s not for all of us. For all of us, it takes time to explore what exists outside the box and to come to our own understanding on our own. Like, for me, I only finally came to understand my sexual orientation in like my mid-20s, I would say like 22-24. And even now, I’m 30 years old and still, I have this internalized homophobia where I’m like, “Am I gay enough?” Like, “Am I sure I’m gay enough? Am I sure I’m bisexual enough to call myself bisexual?” And it’s like, “Yes, Sonalee, yes you fucking are.” [laughs] “You have legitimate attraction to individuals who exist outside of the gender binary, outside of the box of cisgender men, and that is all one requires to exist outside the box of heterosexuality.

**Molly:** So you are an expert in so many things. [Sonalee laughs] and you are an expert in the topic of sexual colonization and decolonized sexualities. I know pretty little about those topics. I would love to learn more. First, would you just give us a basic overview of like what those terms mean? Like, what is sexual colonization? How does that affect our lives?

**Sonalee:** Totally. So, the understanding of sexuality using the lens of colonialism. The purpose of that is to understand, like, the way that everything exists today in 2018. Like the way we understand gender, like a gender binary, like most places in the U.S., most people are like “There’s only two sexes, there’s only two genders. And that’s it, there’s nothing in between, there’s no other options. There’s only one sexual orientation that’s legitimate and that’s heterosexuality and everything else is homosexuality, and that’s the bad one.”

And also the same with like, feminine genders as well. Like that’s all maligned under patriarchy. But the way we got this way, the way that only two genders were given to us as options, the reason two sexual orientations are given to us as two options, and one is like, starkly prioritized and elevated as the only correct option, heterosexuality. The reason this has happened is because of colonialism. So when you look at the work that many brilliant historians have compiled for us, and excavated through the archives, we learn that in—depending on where our families and our ancestors have come from if we were to look at the U.S. at least. Indigenous folks here in the States, before it was known as the United States, acknowledged more than five genders; had family systems that look very similar to the ones that Black Americans organize in now in 2018. With the grandparents parenting children and there’s a much more collectivist understanding of child-rearing, and communal understanding of child-rearing.

We had many other options other than just a binary system. Two choices, and one being elevated as the great, primary, golden choice and correct answer. And colonialism, the reason that colonialism wants this to exists, they want only two choices, is because when you only offer two choices, one has to be more correct than the other. And when you have a more correct answer than the other, you create a hierarchy. And for colonialism to work, colonialism has to come in, white colonists have to come in and say, “My way of doing things is much better than your brown way of doing things. And my white way of doing things says that we have two genders, and this is the really finite list of things that people in those two genders do. One does cooking and one does hunting. And there is one sexual orientation choice, and there is one way that a family system works, and that’s it. There’s no other options. This is the most successful way to create a society. And anything outside of that, the way brown alternatives are existing, are wrong. And that hierarchy has to exist.”

So, colonialism helps us to understand like, why are things the way they are right now, and do we have to continue living that way? Like, if that’s not working for us anymore like the gender binary isn’t working anymore, we can get rid of it! We don’t have to continue using it. And we come to that conclusion by understanding how colonialism forced us into this option. And it’s a false forcing of options. We don’t have to make a choice between two.

**Molly:** Thank you so much for explaining all that, I really appreciate it. With that in mind, what would it look like to decolonize gender and sexuality? I mean I’m sure there are many options. I’m wondering, like, what you think about when you think about that.

**Sonalee:** Decolonizing is simply the process of understanding that we don’t have to only have two options. And that can mean either when I design a form in the nonprofit that I work at, when I design the medical intake form, I’m going to make sure that there are more than two boxes for someone to write in the gender. And for me, that is a form of decoloniality. We are deconstructing the idea that there’s only two boxes to check from.

I can decolonize when I think through, um, when I meet a stranger, and I don’t assume their gender, and I don’t assume their pronouns, and I don’t assume the gender pronouns of their partner or partners, or even that they have a partner. All of these things are ways that we unlearn the dominant teaching of this colonial culture. Of this colonial, Western understanding of what a relationship looks like, of what a successful relationship that turns into a marriage looks like. What a successful family looks like. What a healthy body looks like. You know, that healthy bodies are only thin bodies, things like that. When we unlearn those ideas, that’s also a form of decolonization.

**Molly:** So you said that your 9-5 job is as a social worker, um-

**Sonalee:** Yeah! Mhm!

**Molly:** When you speak with other social workers about these concepts, and about yeah, like, gender and your gender specifically, and decolonizing gender in general, like how do other folks tend to respond in that field?

**Sonalee:** [laughs] That’s a lovely question! So, I actually had to—I don’t say had to—I was actually afforded the privilege and honor of being selected to give a workshop at my New Jersey National Association of Social Workers’ Conference. In this workshop, I had elected to teach folks, like, these are the range of what folks are using to describe their gender and sexuality now in 2018. And when I had described some of these terms that, I mean, I would think are pretty common in 2018, like, I’m saying like, transgender. Like not even agender or demiromantic, not even that advanced. Like, transgender.

We were like, breaking down the term transgender in a room of like, 100 social workers. In 2018. And that was appalling. And then—and I hadn’t realized that one—cause on my first slide when I start a presentation in a workshop, I always announce my pronouns to kind of normalize this idea of acknowledging gender in the room. And reminding us all that we can’t see gender and the only way to really know someone’s gender is to ask. And I said and announced that I was nonbinary and no one asked me what that meant. [laughs] And I didn’t realize that one person, only one other person in the room other than me, really knew what that meant. One other social worker in a room of a hundred knew what nonbinary meant other than me in 2018.

So social workers are grossly undereducated about sexuality and gender and that is why my work as a sex educator and a sex therapist is to go into social work spaces and, you know, bring us up to date, bring us up to speed. Because, now in 2018, like I saw an article that said something like, less than 50% of teens in this day and age identify as hetero or cis. Less than 50%. So to me, that’s like, striking and freaking amazing. AND, also, social workers need to like, get with it. Like, if you need to make flashcards, if you need to make index cards, like, whatever it is you gotta do, figure it out.

But my agency has really been coming around, like, they have been doing tremendous, extensive LGBT training in the last 6 to 9 months. And a lot of nonprofits encourage these like, big swooping changes throughout the agency whenever we get new funding sources. So like the government will create this grant, and say, “We will give you $50,000 if you distribute these services to this specific population which is like an LGBT population. Which is surprising because, yes, under the government of Trump, this money has been allocated to my agency, but it might even be from like a state source? I’m not sure if it’s even federal. But finally folks are like, writing their gender pronouns in their email signatures, and this is like a pretty big nonprofit. Like hundreds of people. So I feel like that’s a big deal. I feel like it’s a really big deal and I’m really glad about it.

**Molly:** Yeah. That’s really terrific I’m really glad to hear that. The first part, not so glad to hear [both laugh] So um, like I have a really, uh……rosy view cause I have so many friends who are trans social workers so I’m like—

**Sonalee:** Mmmm…

**Molly:** Oh, everything’s great! [both laugh]

**Sonalee:** Mhm!!!

**Molly:** So that’s why I asked, maybe it’s not great…. Alright…. So you do a lot of amazing work around body image and body positivity as well, and you specifically talk in your work about body image trauma. And I was wondering if you could define that for us.

**Sonalee:**  Oh my gosh, I’m so glad you asked! So what I understand body image trauma to be is a two-part thing. So the first way to experience body image trauma would be if you were in a relationship with somebody and you felt like there was pressure in the relationship to remain a certain body size. And you were expected to perform certain “good health behaviors” (and I put “good health behaviors” in air quotes, just in case you can’t hear the air quotes). [both laugh] You’re required to perform these “good health behaviors” in order to remain lovable, worthy of being in the relationship, um, worthy of praise, uh, worthy of accolades, getting photos posted on social media, worthy of like, walking out in public together. There are like a lot of, uh, symbolic rewards given to someone who would perform these like, good health behaviors.

And the second way that I imagine body image trauma is experienced is when someone moves through the world with a non-normative body. And I say non-normative only to identify that there is a narrow understanding of what is conventionally attractive and anyone who exists outside of that might experience ridicule, torment, dehumanization based on their body features. And I specify fatness because the way that folks especially in the west dehumanize and torture and deliver pain to fat individuals is just so barbaric in ways that are a little bit different from things like someone who might have quote-unquote “bad skin” or someone who might have, quote-unquote “alopecia.” Or something that feels more aesthetic, as opposed to something like dark skin where like, if you have dark skin and you are encountering a police officer that might be life and death. If I am super-duper fat, and I don’t use the word obese because obese feels hyper medical, like—

**Molly:** Mmmmhmmmm.

**Sonalee:** Unnecessarily medicalized word to describe the amount of adipose tissue on someone’s body.

**Molly:** Mmmhmmm.

**Sonalee:** So, a super fat person who might go to see a doctor, might receive bad medical advice that could put themselves in life or death situation. And I think about that when I think about body image trauma. Like, are there ways that the body’s being profiled and discriminated against in ways that feel nonconsensual and put that body within an experience of minority stress? Which create feelings of anxiety, can create heart conditions, can create gastrointestinal issues, migraines…minority stress has very real physical effects on the body.

**Molly:** Yeah. I actually, just this morning, received a Twitter message from a listener from this podcast who was telling me that they are trans and they were with an abusive partner when they were first coming out and their abusive partner tried to force them to de-transition and was like, policing

**Sonalee:** Ooooh.

**Molly:** the way that their gender was presenting. And I’ve also heard from other queer folks who had partners who sort of forced them into different gender presentation than what they were comfortable with. So would that be considered body image trauma as well?

**Sonalee:** I would, absolutely I would. And that, it’s super gendered too. And I would even consider that transphobia, and that was something that I had a similar experience in when I was in an abusive relationship in my early twenties.

I don’t think I had worn dresses until then because I identified as kinda masculine most of my childhood. And I didn’t really wear dresses cause they actually weren’t really super accessible to me like I had a hard time finding clothes that fit anyway and only when I was in an abusive relationship with a cis man who very much hated women, was I pushed into that gendered box. Of makeup, of dresses, of presenting in high heels. Like, things that I just never did in the rest of my life, and, don’t do, in my current life [chuckles] like I don’t wear high heels. But I do dabble with makeup.

**Molly:** Yeah! That’s something that I hear as well, is when women or nonbinary folks who present more masculine, or start exploring their genders, and so they’re presenting increasingly masculine, when they do that with cis male partners, the cis men are extremely upset, because like, it’s challenging their heterosexuality, right?

**Sonalee:** Ah! Yes it is!

**Molly:** To have their partner um shift more masculine, but its—I don’t know. It just makes me really upset and really scared and I don’t really have a question, I just thought of that and like, Oh No! [laughs]

**Sonalee:** Yes, and that is kind of what was happening! The abusive partner, I don’t ever use his name, I call him Neanderthal actually. [Molly laughs] Neanderthal, I think it was like on my first date, and he had said something like, “You wear jeans?? Only lesbians wear jeans.” [Molly cackles with delight at the absurdity of this statement] Right?!?! Like just the most absurd thing to ever say or believe and, you know, that should’ve been my first red flag. But, it took me a while, it took me almost a year and a half to be like, uh, oh wow, okay, this is bullshit, and it’s time to leave!

**Molly:** Well I’m glad you were able to do that, it does take a long time sometimes, and it’s just...

**Sonalee:** It took waaaay too long, and yeah. It takes on average 7 to 9 times of trying before someone actually leaves an abusive relationship.

**Molly:** Mhm. So, like we said you do a lot of work with body positivity and body image. And like in the context of this show which speaks about gender, what that makes me think about is how trans folks have these like really astronomical uh, astronomically high numbers of eating disorders and body image issues. I’m just wondering if you had advice for folks whose trans identity is leading to harmful thoughts about their body.

**Sonalee:** Absolutely, absolutely. So a lot of these ideas come from this idea that we’re leaving a body that, in no way feels like it aligns with how I feel inside. And there’s this aspirational ideal that I want to attain. And I read about this idea from a HuffPost article in case anyone is curious about it. And it is from the perspective of someone who is trans-masculine. And in it, they write that while they were in a body that felt more feminine they knew that it wasn’t a more aligned body for them because it looked in ways that didn’t feel ideal. And only when they were transitioning did they have this like really narrow understanding of the lanky body they were looking for but they had a really difficult time attaining. Part of the realization that we should first come to is that not all of us have the kind of control over our bodies that diet culture wants us to believe that we do have.

**Molly:** Mmmmhmmm.

**Sonalee:** Not all of us have the ability to lose the X number of pounds that we think we can or should.

**Molly:** Yeah, I’d argue almost none of us do. [both laugh]

**Sonalee:** It is super radical to say that, believe it or not, but it is correct. You are absolutely correct. On average, 95% of diets don’t work and the reason is that our bodies know exactly what size they want to be. And we have to trust our bodies. In some ways! When we feel comfortable and able to. One of the best ways that I was able to come to terms with: this is what my body looks like, I don’t actually have control over my body, and body acceptance is going to be the number one best salve to soothe my insecurities about what my—how my body changes and adjusts with time and over time. The number one suggestion that I offer is adjusting and being aware of our visual diet.

Our visual diet is all of the bodies that we visually consume through print media, through television, movies, advertisements on the side of a bus stop. The types of bodies that we see in our families, in our friends, in our workplaces, in our schools. And when we have a good idea of all the bodies that we visually consume in like, a week, a month, or a year, we’re able to understand that that set of bodies that we consume actually sets a normal within our brains. And when we’re only visually consuming bodies on like our social media feeds that feel different to the body that we might be in, when we look at bodies that look super different to ours, in our brains it establishes that other body as a normal body. And in our brains, it can kind of have this narrowing effect and this rigidity when we think about what a healthy, happy good body can look like.

But we can actually adjust that in our brains on what we think is normal and good and healthy and happy just by adding in different shaped bodies, different colored bodies, different size bodies, different disabled bodies into our visual diets. So for me personally like, a couple years ago I had a really hard time with the fatness of my arms. And I would look in the mirror and I would just say like, ‘Ugh, they’re getting fatter, they’re getting fatter, like what am I going to do? And what had really helped me to accept my arms and to see them as positive was the images of other people with fat arms who looked happy. Who looked like they were in happy relationships, who looked like they were eating good food with their fat arms exposed. Who looked like they were receiving love from their friends and community members, who felt like they were doing work that fulfilled them. Like, seeing fat arms in action really helped me to see my fat arms as, “Oh! That’s a body part that can exist. It can look like that.” And it also helped me to see it as a positive thing.

Like, when I sit next to my sister in my family’s van when we go on a road trip, you know, she really likes to lean on my fat, squishy, soft arm to take a nap when we’re driving ten hours. And, you know what? All my younger cousins tell me I give the best hugs. Because of my fat arms! And when I’m able to look at my body part and think of all the positive things that that body part does for me, I’m able to see this body as something that I have earned. I’m able to see it as a body that I’ve inherited. I’m able to see this body as something that belongs to me, because it was passed down to me by people in my family, it is a body that I’ve inherited and it’s a family heirloom and It’s something that is supposed to look this way.

**Molly:** That was so beautiful, thank you so much for sharing that, you’re like, the most incredible speaker we’ve ever had on this show. [both laugh] So this is the part of the show where I ask if there’s anything else that we haven’t talked about yet that you would like to talk about or that’s on your mind right now.

**Sonalee:** What is on my mind right now..? Oo, you know what? I just started reading this great book, if anyone is curious about a lot of these ideas on like, fatphobia, diet culture, I just started reading this book that is by a friend of mine, Virgie Tovar. It’s called “You have the Right to Remain Fat.” It is a great book about how fatphobia creates this hierarchy class of people between people who perform these weight loss behaviors and people who don’t. And how people who do perform these behaviors are treated better, they’re afforded more privileges from society. And the ones who don’t get blamed for their bad health conditions, and get blamed for the poor treatment they receive in society, and aren’t offered the humanity they deserve. And Virgie is actually this brilliant and prolific writer. So you can find a lot of her stuff just on Google for free. And she writes a lot about colonialism and body image, and she writes a lot of advice columns too, like, you know, what do I do if my partner is fetishizing me for my body size? You know, how am I supposed to feel about that?

The only catch about Virgie is that she really writes from this really stark gendered binary and a really hetero—not, I shouldn’t say heterosexist, but it’s not as queer as I would have written it or I would have liked for it to have been written. And so you have to do a little bit of imagination when she writes, like, “This is something that affects women.” you have to kind of add in your head, like “women, nonbinary, trans folks, non-cis men…’

**Molly:** Mhmmmm [Sonalee laughs] We’re all used to doin’ that. [Molly laughs]

**Sonalee:** You don’t, I’m sorry, in this book you don’t get to turn that off. That brain editing software that we all have. But it’s an excellent primer, excellent, excellent.

**Molly:** Alright I have one more question for you but before that, where can folks find you and your work?

**Sonalee:** [gasps] Ah! So if I’ve said anything today that you’ve loved, or you hated, or you found super-duper offensive! I would love to know.

And you can email me through my contact form on my website. And the address for that website is [www.sonaleer.com](http://www.sonaleer.com). In addition to that, I am known, um, pretty endearingly, as @thefatsextherapist on Instagram. And I love to call myself fat, I do not see it as a negative term, I use it non-judgmentally to describe my body size and shape, and I am owning the idea that this is now my brand as the fat sex therapist. And that’s a great place to find me and read some of the stuff that I’m chewing on day to day, as far as like, good, positive body image memes, and ways to unlearn diet culture through like, meme culture.

**Molly:** It’s so interesting how Instagram can really be a double-edged sword in that way, in that it can cause you to like…

**Sonalee:** Oooh, yeah.

**Molly:**  … compare yourself in many ways to a lot of other people and to a detriment to your mental health. But also can be a really powerful tool like you said of like reminding yourself maybe who look like you or maybe who don’t look like you are also really valid and having really wonderful lives and that their experience is just as valid as like the norms that we’re all taught. So. Yeah!

**Sonalee:** Oh my gosh, yes! And that’s the other thing that’s important about visual diet. If there are people in your feeds that are kind of encouraging that internal dialogue, not that they’re intentionally encouraging it, but like in our bodies we’re feeling this encouragement of like, self-critical talk and like, negative self-talk, it’s okay to unfollow those folks. It’s okay to balance—we can mute them without them knowing that we’ve unfollowing. So, mute away. Unfollow on Facebook away.

**Molly:**  It’s…yeah. [Sonalee laughs] That mute button really saves you when you have a friend who you love so much but is posting stuff that’s ruining you. [both laugh]

**Sonalee:** Ugh! I’m right there with you. [laughs]

**Molly:**  Alright. Well, the way we always end the show is by asking in your ideal world, what would the future of gender look like?

**Sonalee:** Oh my gosh….. Well, I really love food metaphors and I love thinking about liberation through pleasure. So for me, liberation would be the ability to access all the ways that we feel joy and good and happiness and pleasure and that means respecting and honoring everyone’s right to exist exactly as they are and lollipops and rainbows and cupcakes and vats of hot fudge and all the things that everyone likes to eat.

**Molly:**  What a dream! That’s like, the most delicious answer we’ve ever received. [laughs]

**Sonalee:** I feel like my idea of gender liberation is like my idea of like, sexual liberation and body liberation and the right to exist in exactly the shape, size, form you are without having to change any part of your body if you don’t want to.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music starts]

**Molly:**  That’s gonna do it for this week’s show. You can follow Sonalee on Instagram @thefatsextherapist, you can follow us on Twitter and Instagram @gendereveal with one R. There you can also learn how to win my personal copy of “A Quick and Easy Guide to They/Them Pronouns.” Don’t forget to celebrate my sad sick birthday by telling some friends how much they’d love Gender Reveal, and maybe even throwing a couple bucks toward our production costs at [patreon.com/gender](http://patreon.com/gender). Don’t forget that if you donate $5 or more I’ll send you stickers in the mail, $6 or more and I’ll get you a glittery button. Thanks so much to everyone who’s already done those things. This podcast literally wouldn’t exist without you and I appreciate you so much. If you’re looking for episode transcripts or other information about this show, you can do that at [genderpodcast.com](http://genderpodcast.com) OR [yourcoolgaydad.com](http://yourcoolgaydad.com). We did it!

On a related note, if you have suggestions about what I should do with [yourcoolgaydad.com](http://yourcoolgaydad.com), please let me know. This week’s show was produced and edited as always by me, Molly Woodstock. Our logo is by the talented Michelle Leigh, our theme song is by the legendary Breakmaster Cylinder. Thank you to everyone who’s listened all the way to the end. We’ll be back next week with more feelings about gender.

[*Gender Reveal* theme music ends]