

# The Done Bingeing PODCAST

## EPISODE 12: THE DESIRE TO OVEREAT

*What does running to pick up a ringing phone have to do with losing weight? Keep listening!*

Welcome to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. This is the place to hear about how you can pair the emerging brain science about why you binge with powerful life coaching to help you stop. If you're functioning well in your life and you want to explore a non-clinical approach to end bingeing, you're in the right place! You have more power than you know. Why not take it back? And now, your host, Life and Weight-Loss Coach Martha Ayim.

Welcome to Episode 12 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. I'm so glad you're here with me.

I have to say thank you to so many of you who have reached out to me via email at [martha@holdingthespace.co](mailto:martha@holdingthespace.co) or through a free private coaching session. I feel like I'm getting to know you and now that I know some of your names and your unique struggles, I kind of imagine myself chatting beside you in your car if you're listening while driving, or walking alongside you if you're listening while out for a stroll, or sitting down at your kitchen table if you're listening while putzing around. I'm so grateful to you for all of your feedback on the podcast, for sharing your appreciation and wisdom, for your insightful questions and comments.

And I'm in awe of the vulnerability and courage you bring when you sign up and show up for a free coaching session. It may not be easy to spend this time with me. And not for the reasons you may think. It's not because it's an awkward sales pitch in disguise—it's not; if I think you're a good fit for my programs, I'll ask for your permission to mention them, and if not it's totally fine. It's not because you can't find the time to speak with me—you can; if you have time to binge, you have time to talk.

So, why might 30 minutes with me be hard to sign up for? Here's why:

Because the door is open.

Because it's free to enter.

Because no shame will greet you on the other side.

Because it's a step toward massive action to end your binges.

Because you may sense that true freedom from binge eating lies on the other side of that door—and *that* may be what you fear the most.

What's the first thing you do when you promise yourself you'll never binge again? Let me guess. You binge. On the Sunday night before the Monday morning when it ends for good. You promise. It's just one more binge for the road. Just one more to say goodbye to what has felt like an old friend.

The tears sometimes flow in these free sessions, sometimes because you're sad that you don't think you can stop bingeing, but more often because you're sad that you now know you can.

And I *so* get it.

And I've *so* got you. We'll start where you are and take it from there. There's no wrong place to start. There probably isn't a single thing you've tried that I didn't. I doubt there's a single thing you could tell me that would surprise me. There certainly isn't a single thing that I would shame you for. I've got you.

So, if you haven't signed up for your free time with me, you totally need to do this.

Why?

Because it will take courage and vulnerability to sign up—and courage and vulnerability will serve you well on this journey.

And because it will require you to show up. And to end your bingeing you'll have to show up for yourself in ways you never expected. Our time together is an act of practicing showing up for yourself. This is exactly what you'll need to do to end your binges, whether you work with me or not.

So, if you're willing to be courageous and vulnerable, sign up. And if you're willing show up, I'll be there, waiting on the other side of that door.

Alright! Now, let's get back to the podcast.

As you know, since Episode 3, we have been applying the concept of self-regard to pretty much every nook and cranny of binge eating—from feeling unhappy about your weight to using diets as a tool to try to fix your weight and control your eating, from what to do about the urges to what to do about the binges to how to make the most out of the aftermath of a binge. This week, we're beginning to shine the light of self-regard on weight loss.

One reason people return to bingeing is because they're so frustrated with their weight after they stop bingeing.

When I stopped bingeing, about 60 pounds came off as a result. But even after that, I was still roughly 30 pounds overweight. Whenever I asked for help at this stage, I'd get a lot of hemming and hawing. I was continually warned that any attempt to lose that weight would trigger a binge. "It's just time to love your body" is what I'd hear over and over.

The thing is, I had come to a place where I did love my body. But I *still* wanted to be my natural weight, and I knew I wasn't there yet.

What helped me drop the last 30 pounds? Taking action from a place of being okay with my body. Learning powerful coaching techniques to eliminate desire for foods that I really didn't want to eat anymore. Learning how hormones work in my body to make me feel hungry and full as well to store fat or lose it. Learning about how many of our smartest scientists devote their lives to chemically engineering foods that would keep me wanting more.

So, the last part of my struggle with binge eating came down to losing weight after I'd stopped bingeing—*without* triggering any more binges.

Losing weight after being a binge eater can be a tricky business, which is why most approaches will barely touch the topic. I've left this issue to the end in this series on self-regard because without a solid foundation, any weight loss information I offer risks just being rehashed into another hysteria-driven, hate-based dieting mentality. I'm done with that, and I hope you are too.

Now, weight might not be an issue for you. In fact, Episode 4, on weight, we talked about how not every binge eater is overweight, and not every binge eater is unhappy with their weight (whether it's "technically" above their ideal weight or not). And if that's you, that's fine. But, I encourage you to listen anyway because sometimes weight issues change as we age and the information in this episode may be helpful down the road.

For most binge eaters, the research does show a strong link between binge eating and excess weight or obesity, and indicates a strong correlation between binge eating and an intense concern with one's weight and shape (APA, 2013; Herpetz et al., 2011; Tanofsky-Kraff et al., 2013).

In Episode 4, I also talked about how easing my own unhappiness with my weight made my healing from binge eating so much easier. At almost one hundred pounds overweight, I felt like I was constantly lugging a huge backpack. Yet, my body was still the home for my time on this earth. And for that, I could be profoundly grateful. I also knew that in another time, or another culture, or another land, my size would have been viewed by the dominant society as just fine. That gave me perspective. Gratitude and perspective helped me to get to a place where I could give myself permission to practice letting my body be okay at the weight it was, even though it wasn't where I wanted it to be.

Episode 5, on food restriction, strongly encouraged you to let go of the diet mentality as a way to effect weight loss or control eating because giving it up is pretty much a deal-breaker when it comes to ending bingeing. It took me about 25 years to accept that dieting wasn't a long-term solution and that it was becoming less effective every time I went on a new diet. Part of the reason I was so reluctant to give up diets was because they did work temporarily and I didn't know another way to address my weight.

Some of you come to me *willing* to give up the diets. Usually you've been dieting for decades at this point and you're weary and no longer convinced that dieting is the answer. Now, some of you are convinced because you *couldn't* stick to a diet and are no longer willing to shame yourself for that. Some are you are

convinced because you *did* stick to a diet yet the plateaus came, your hunger increased, and your weight returned.

Some of you come to me *unwilling* to let go of diets, and you really see it as the only way to control your eating. And this isn't surprising. If your experience was anything like mine, most doctors and nutritionists told me the same thing—that I needed to control my eating by following a diet. But when I finally stopped dieting, my bingeing decreased dramatically, and I started to lose weight.

Now, when I began to lose that weight, I was eating daily food proportions that were typically recommended in a North American food pyramid—heavy on the breads, cereals, rice, and pasta; moderate on fruits, vegetables, protein, and dairy; and relatively light on fats and sweets. But with added encouragement to eat regular-sized desserts several times a week; for me at the time, that was a chocolate-chunk banana muffin with a strawberry milkshake.

In some ways, this approach made it easier for me in the early days of letting go of my bingeing. I had no good foods and bad foods, and so I no longer lived under the tyranny of black-and-white, all-or-nothing thinking. You know the drill—you're either totally on or totally off a food plan; if you slip even a bit, you may as well throw in the towel because you're not totally on the plan, right? It was a relief to let go of that kind of thinking. I could eat often and respond instantly to physiological hunger—once I'd figured out what that was again.

In other ways, this approach meant that I could only go to so far because it didn't address five key reasons behind my binges and behind my residual excess weight after I stopped bingeing. These were:

- my desire to overeat
- the role hormones played in my weight and in my hunger and satiation cues
- the neural connections anchoring my behavior
- my reluctance to deal with difficult emotions and
- my ignorance of how my thoughts cascaded into my feelings, my actions, and the results I created in my life

I've already touched on the last three reasons in earlier episodes and I'll continue to explore them in more depth in the weeks ahead. All of this will take time to carefully unpack, and it's worth it to go at a reasonable pace. For right now, let's get to work on sketching out the first of the key reasons behind our excess weight.

When we focus on losing weight, we're just treating the symptom—the tip of the iceberg, the part of the problem that we can see. We're not addressing what lies below, the bulk of the problem that we can't see. We have to dive beneath the surface to find the underlying causes of being overweight. One of the biggest culprits is the desire to overeat.

And I have to credit to my teacher, my coach, and my mentor, Brooke Castillo, co-founder of The Life Coach School, for teaching me about desire in this way. I'm so lucky to have been trained by her to teach her exclusive weight-loss program. I've adapted her program so that it is specifically applicable to binge eating.

The desire the overeat is one of the biggest pieces that is missing from all diets and all attempts to lose weight.

I want you to consider the following two scenarios to understand the difference between trying to lose weight while still having the desire to overeat versus losing weight without the desire to overeat:

Okay, so first, here's what it's like to try to lose weight *while still having the desire to overeat*. In other words, here's what it's like to not overeat, but really *want* to overeat: "Oh my God, I wish I could eat that six-stack of pancakes with warm butter and maple syrup, but I'm not going to." Can you feel the tension in that statement? Is it any wonder that this approach doesn't last for long?

Now compare that with this. Here's what it's like to lose weight *without having the desire to overeat*. In other words, here's what it's like to not overeat, and have *no desire* to overeat: "There's a six-stack of pancakes with warm butter and maple syrup that I could eat right now, but I simply don't want to eat it." In this scenario, those pancakes may as well be a stack of CD cases drizzled with warm candle wax. You can feel the difference in this statement, right?

You can get to a point where you genuinely don't want to overeat. Right now, you have the desire to overeat. How do you know? Because when you don't allow yourself to overeat, you feel like you're sacrificing something, missing out on something, or giving up something. You feel *deprivation*.

Now think about something that you don't consume that you have no desire to consume. For example, if you're a non-smoker, if you don't have a cigarette do you feel like you're sacrificing or missing out? No. Do you feel deprived? No. Would it matter if there were a carton of cigarettes in front of you? No. Would you have to use willpower not to chain-smoke that carton? No. Would you have to ask for the carton to be removed from your sight so you wouldn't be tempted? No. You simply wouldn't smoke them because they're irrelevant.

Now, if cigarettes aren't a good example for you, think of something that is. Maybe it's cocaine. Do you miss the fact that you don't snort it?

Now if neither cigarettes nor cocaine provides a good example of something you simply have no desire for, please come up with something for me—something that you genuinely don't want.

You can feel the same way about overeating a stack of pancakes as you do about smoking a carton of cigarettes or snorting some lines of the white stuff (assuming that these are examples of things you have no desire for). You can have that stack of pancakes right in front of you without it being a problem, without feeling like you're sacrificing or missing out. Without feeling deprived or needing to use willpower. Without having to ask that the plate be whisked away. You don't need to adjust in any way to the pancakes because they have no power over you. The pancakes aren't a temptation or an issue for you. The pancakes are *irrelevant*.

*That is freedom.*

Virtually every weight loss approach focuses on eating less, while your desire to eat more still goes through the roof. This makes trying to eat less painful. But this deprivation is caused by fighting against your desire to overeat. The relentless tension feels awful, and then what happens? You binge.

But it's the desire to overeat that makes it painful not to overeat. If you didn't desire overeating, overeating wouldn't be a problem. If you didn't *want* to overeat, you wouldn't have to use willpower or feel deprivation to stop yourself from overeating.

You don't need to focus on eating less. You need to focus on *desiring* less. Do you see the difference? No longer *wanting* to overeat is far more imperative as a goal than wanting to lose weight. Because being overweight is often just a symptom of the underlying cause: the desire to overeat. Removing the desire to overeat is central to permanent weight loss.

You can unlearn this desire to overeat. But are you willing to do it? That may not be an easy question for you to answer, but it's important that you know your answer—and that you like your reason for answering the way you do.

That's the topic of upcoming episodes.

We are going to remove that desire to overeat. Remember when I started this episode by asking you to sign up for a free private session? I asked you to do that because I want you to practice showing up for yourself. And I want you to show up for this podcast in a whole new way.

We are going. To come with us, you're going to have to show up in ways you never imagined. To come with us, you're going to have to evolve into a higher version of yourself. To come with us, you're going to have to honor your dreams.

I know you're scared. I was too. But here's why it's worth the price of fear:

Because never again in the history of the universe will there ever be another you.

Ever.

You need you.

We need you.

Life is calling.

Answer the call.

That's it for Episode 12. Thank you for listening.

It's one thing to learn these concepts on an intellectual level, but applying them with the direct one-on-one guidance of a coach gets you results so much faster. If you're done with bingeing, click the link in the show notes to sign up for a free private session and see how coaching can help.

Thanks for listening to this episode of *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. Remember, although life coaching can complement therapy, it's not a substitute for therapy if that's what you require. Make sure you get the support you need. And let Martha know if she can help you along the way. Come back next week for more on saying goodbye to the binge.

## References

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