

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 27: RISKING FULLNESS

What do tread marks and smoke have to do with risking fullness? 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 want to explore a non-clinical approach to end binge eating, you're in the right place. It's time to free yourself. You have more power than you know. And now, your host, Life and Weight-Loss Coach Martha Ayim.

Welcome to Episode 27 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast*.

In the last couple of episodes, we've been talking about what it means for you to be hungry and full and about the risk that may be involved in allowing yourself to feel hungry.

I shared how I was so afraid of hunger that it took me weeks to find the courage to feel it.

But for some of my clients, they're not afraid of feeling hungry. They're afraid of feeling full. Some are afraid of feeling even remotely satisfied. I've had clients come to me not eating all day and able to tolerate prolonged periods of intense hunger, only to binge in the evening when they couldn't take any more. Hunger wasn't really what troubled them. It was fullness.

For me, I made sure I didn't feel hungry for years. I hovered as close to +10 on the fullness scale as I could possibly get while still managing to function to a reasonable degree. And so my work was to edge down from around a +9 on the fullness scale to a -1 on the hunger scale.

For some of my clients, they haven't felt satisfied for years. They sprint from starved to stuffed, then slide back down to start the cycle again. And so their work has been to edge up from around a -6 or -7, sometimes even -8, on the hunger scale to a +1 on the fullness scale.

If this is you, what emotion would you need to feel to allow yourself to tiptoe toward the edge of even the slightest satisfaction when it comes to eating to a +1 on the fullness scale? Would it be curiosity? Courage? Self-regard?

If it's curiosity, what would you need to believe to feel curious? Would you need to believe that it might be worth exploring how a little less hunger and a little more satisfaction might work for you?

If it's courage, what would you need to believe to feel courageous? Would you need to believe that you're willing to experience the discomfort of less hunger and more satisfaction on tiny step at a time?

If it's self-regard, what would you need to believe to feel fierce love and respect for yourself? Would you need to believe that you are a human being who has the right to be nourished, just like every other human on the planet?

Being open to experiencing satisfaction from food is part of the journey out of bingeing. As innocuous as this sounds, it can be challenging at first.

You may associate eating until you're satisfied with a terror of gaining weight. But is the thought, "I'll gain weight if I eat when I'm hungry," really serving you? My guess is that you have enough evidence to show you that it's not. Maybe you starve, then binge. Or maybe you reside in a half-starved state much of the time and are at or close to your desired weight, but you're still afraid. Why? Because you don't know for how much longer you can hold out.

Maybe you associate eating until you're satisfied with a loss of control. But is the thought, "I'll lose control if I eat when I'm hungry," really serving you? You probably have enough evidence that that thought's not serving you either. Either you lose control after a certain period of deprivation or you sustain the deprivation and lose control over other areas in your life, like sleep, emotional regulation, productivity, or social connection. Why? Because forced deprivation takes up substantial cognitive real estate that can no longer be devoted to resting peacefully, feeling fully, working energetically, or listening deeply.

You may associate eating until you're satisfied with a sense of unwarranted joy. But is the thought, "I don't deserve to eat when I'm hungry, I don't deserve to feel joy from food," really serving you? I doubt it. Maybe you got this message from a host of diet programs whose books or supplements or packaged foods still take up space in your home and in your mind. And maybe you believed this message and your body responded by holding on to its weight or gaining more. Why? Because when food of any kind becomes an illicit substance, the alarms from your panicked lower brain will sound . . . louder and louder until you listen.

You may associate eating until you're satisfied with a shame that pierced your heart when someone long ago asked if you should really be eating if you're so fat. But is the thought, "People will think I'm a pig if I eat when I'm hungry," really serving you? I don't think so. It's a ghost of a memory that haunts the halls of your mind. Why? Perhaps because you haven't laid it to rest. People are allowed to think and say what they want about you. Trying to control them otherwise will almost undoubtedly send you spiraling into misery. Just like you can give yourself permission to think thoughts that are true and helpful, you can give others permission to think thoughts that are false and unhelpful. In doing so, you give them freedom and yourself power. It's a win-win.

So often we adopt thoughts from others or ourselves without, well, without much thought. But remember something that we've talked about before: as a human, you have a privilege shared by no other animal—the ability to think about what you think. And if you're willing to *stand back* and access

your gentle witness, your compassionate watcher, you may find that you're willing to *stand up* for yourself and deliberately choose thoughts that serve you.

Allowing yourself to eat to a gentle satisfaction or light fullness requires awareness to discern what the experience is actually like for you.

When you're hungry, ask yourself what is the kindest way that you can respond to your hunger. What types of food does your body like? What foods make you feel sluggish after a few hours? What foods make you feel bloated? What foods make you feel energized?

When you eat, slow down and pay attention to the food—the texture, the sight, the smell, the taste. Stop after every mouthful and evaluate. Do you like the food? Does your body like the food? Where are you on the hunger–fullness scale after each bite? Remember, the scale ranges from -10 (so hungry you can't move) to 0 (neutral, neither hungry nor full) to +10 (so full you can't move). Have you reached 0? Were you willing to reach a +1, a +2, maybe even a +3?

After you eat, stay connected to the experience moment by moment. How many bites did it take for you to reach where you did on the hunger–fullness scale? Was that surprising to you? Why or why not? What did each level on the scale feel like for you? How does your body feel right after eating? What emotion are you experiencing right after? What's the thought causing that emotion? What about half-an-hour or an hour after you eat? How are you feeling and what are you thinking?

Just as there can be a struggle to get to hunger, people who binge eat can struggle to adjust to a new kind of fullness—an enriching, vitalizing fullness in place of a smothering, numbing fullness.

No matter what you eat or how much you eat, notice. Give yourself permission to experience not just the food but the act of feeding yourself. It is a powerful act of self-regard to give your body the fuel it needs when it needs it. Why? Because you're giving yourself not just permission to live, but the ability to live.

To live, you need to eat. To eat, you need to risk satisfying your body.

Feeding your body nutritiously is akin to fueling your car diligently. If you put the right fuel in, you'll get a better ride. Do you need electricity for your battery, or a regular or premium gasoline for your tank?

Choose deliberately.

Strap yourself in.

Set the GPS.

Where do you want to go?

If you want to get to the end of bingeing, enter that as your destination, then check the available routes.

The route you drive will be anchored by the thoughts you think.

When I studied neurology as an undergrad, I was blown away by the ridiculous complexity and astounding beauty of the brain. And when I learned about the mechanisms of neuronal action and growth, I was humbled by the potential and power above our shoulders.

You really do get to build a highway in your mind, a network of intersections with functioning and well-timed signals that can make the ride ultimately seem seamless.

You start with a thought, well chosen and well practiced, that will drop dusty gravel for your own country road or will pour steaming asphalt for your own freeway. You choose.

If your destination is freedom from bingeing or overeating, set the GPS with thoughts that will take you along a well-signed, efficient route. Thoughts like “I’ll gain weight if I eat when I’m hungry,” “I’ll lose control if I eat when I’m hungry,” “I don’t deserve to eat when I’m hungry or to feel any joy around my eating,” or “People will think I’m a pig if I eat when I’m hungry” will likely leave you spun out in a ditch or waylaid by detours.

A thought like this one may get you where you’re going so much faster: “What I’ve been doing isn’t working for me, but I’m going to figure out a better way.”

Along the way, could your car break down? Yes. But you’ll find the right person to help you at the right time.

Will there be weather?

Yes.

The clouds will build and the rain will fall. But you have wipers for that.

There may be fog. You’ll need to slow down for that.

Will there be darkness? Yes. About half the time. But there will also be the moon and the stars and, failing that, streetlights and headlights. You may also find that the darkness is just a good time to rest and wait to drive in the light when there is less strain.

And in-between the darkness and the fog and the rain, there will also be plenty of clear blue sky.

Whatever comes, you can handle it.

You’re in your car of choice and ready with your route of choice.

Start your engine. Maybe it purrs like a kitten. Maybe it roars like a tiger.

Take the wheel and hold on.

Perhaps you’ll cruise down the road or perhaps you’ll rip it up, leaving treads of black and threads of smoke behind you.

It’s your call.

It's your ride.

It's your road.

Get on it.

I'll be cheering you on and waiting for you on the other side.

That's it for Episode 27. Thank you for listening. *The Done Bingeing Podcast* is helping people to reduce their bingeing and overeating, and to find out who they're truly meant to be when they live their lives fully. Ratings and reviews will help more people find this podcast and get the help they need. So, if you're getting something out of this podcast, I would be honored if you'd be willing to take the time to leave me a rating and review. Just go to www.holdingthespace.co/itunes-review for easy-peasy instructions on how to get it done. Thank you so much!

Thanks for listening to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. Martha is a certified life and weight loss coach who's available to help you stop bingeing. Book a free session with her at www.holdingthespace.co/book. And stay tuned for next week's episode on freeing yourself from binge eating and creating the life you want.