

The Done Bingeing PODCAST

EPISODE 29: FOOD AND OTHER PEOPLE

What does Jean Paul Sartre have to do with conditioned eating? 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 29 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. I'm going to have to ask you to bear with me throughout this episode. Something's going on with my voice. I think I can get the content out but you'll have to bear with me a little bit. Hopefully next week, my voice will be back.

If you've been with me from the beginning of this podcast, we've been together for more than six months, and it's a privilege to be on this journey with you.

As you know by now, I have a thing for self-regard. One of my clients recently said to me, "Martha, your podcast is such a mind-warp—all that self-respect stuff."

And I have to say, it's the piece that stops most of you in your tracks.

Why?

Because it's rarely occurred to you to treat yourself with dignity so long as you're still bingeing, or overeating, or overweight.

You likely want to reserve self-regard for *after* you stop bingeing or overeating or for *after* you lose the weight.

Am I right?

Many of you assume that there's something fundamentally flawed about you because you can't stop a behavior you so desperately want to be done with.

But there's nothing wrong with you at all. You just have a healthy brain complying with years of training.

When I suggest in our free sessions that your eating behavior reflects a beautifully functioning brain, I almost always hear an audible sigh.

You can't help but feel a bit of relief in the knowledge that you're totally fine and just need to retrain your brain into a new pattern that serves you.

And that's what we've been doing in this podcast.

Since Episode 3, we've used self-regard as the springboard into explorations of six key challenges that binge eaters often experience:

1. Unhappiness with weight—we considered this in Episode 4
2. Dieting to lose that weight and to control eating—we discussed these in Episode 5
3. Urges to binge—we looked into this in episodes 6 through 8
4. The bingeing itself—we tackled this in episodes 9 and 10
5. The post-binge blues—we dove into this in Episode 11, and
6. Losing excess weight after bingeing has stopped. Here is where, in Episode 12, we began to talk about the desire to overeat, about how empowering it would be not to have that desire, and about how the desire to overeat can feel like you're eating against your own will. Like it just happens. Like it's a given.

We learned, though, that our desire to overeat *isn't* just a given. Our desire is learned. And it can be unlearned. To unlearn it, we needed to understand where it comes from in the first place and, so, we began to explore four of its main sources:

1. We use food to anaesthetize painful emotions.
2. We're conditioned to eat by society.
3. Our dopamine system gets hijacked by high-sugar foods.
4. Our hormones are out-of-whack and scrambling our hunger and fullness signals.

Episode 13 began a conversation about emotional eating and talked about eating feelings versus feeling them. Then we talked about understanding feelings and creating feelings by thinking deliberately.

The reason we began to explore thinking is because thoughts create our feelings. And, so, we dove deeper into deliberate thinking by focusing on mental hygiene—otherwise known as cleaning up our thoughts. We talked about what it means to think your way to where you want to go, and what it means to look beyond the end of your bingeing.

Our recent episodes together have been focused on untangling our conditioning to overeat and our disconnection from our own internal hunger and fullness cues.

We learned that we eat when we're not hungry for a number of reasons:

- because we mistake psychological hunger for physiological hunger
- because we're not in tune with our hunger signals
- because we're afraid to feel hungry
- because we're afraid to feel full
- because we don't want waste food
- because we're mad that others aren't different with us around food
- because we're afraid to miss an opportunity to eat
- because we want to look normal
- because we're afraid of what others will think of us
- because food offers something positive to us and we want to keep that feeling going
- because we've been told to eat by a so-called trusted source
- because we want to give the finger to all those diets that swore no deprivation was involved

This episode continues the exploration of conditioned eating and focuses on staying in our power no matter what other people do with food around us.

You might think that your partner shouldn't have brought home Krispy Kreme, or your colleague should think twice before ordering in a crate of muffins for the office, or your neighbor could be a little more thoughtful about sending over cute little Chloe to sell chocolate bars for a desperately desired school trip.

Well, I want to offer you another perspective on navigating the actions of other people in your life, and this comes directly from the insight of my teacher, Brooke Castillo.

Most of us have operating manuals—basically instruction books—full of rules that document how other people should behave. And some of these manuals are pretty thick.

You may have a manual for your partner, coworker, or neighbor, but my guess is that you've never let them read it.

Does your neighbor know that page 139, section 14 d), of *The Neighbor Manual* says no cute kids with freckles and dimples and adorable big eyes and bows in their hair are allowed to ask so incredibly politely for just a few dollars please for a jumbo chocolate bar that would make their dream come true of a school trip to Europe?

Does your colleague know that page 453, paragraph 7, of *The Coworker Manual* clearly lays out the rules that *no* crates of muffins are to be ordered into the office?

Does your partner know that page 927, chapter 26, line 2, of *The Partner Manual* says that he's not supposed to bring home donuts when you're trying to stop bingeing and lose weight for goodness sake?

Probably not. But if you're anything like I was, you use the fact that they haven't memorized the manual—in part because they have no idea that it exists—as a reason to get pretty huffy about so many things in your life.

Let me give you an example. Here's part of the manual—and I mean this is just a tiny part!—of the manual that I had for my husband:

Page 56: He should be thankful that I have-starved myself to lose 20 pounds for our wedding.

Page 91: He should show that gratitude by not having my trigger foods in the house after we move in together so that it's easier for me to maintain that weight loss.

Page 92, section 6 b): For example, he shouldn't leave lemon cake on the kitchen counter for two weeks while he starts out having a sliver every night, then forgets about it until it grows fur and oozes translucent multicolor slime.

Page 179: He should want to work out with me.

Page 182, section 11 f): For example, he should invite me to go on evening walks so that I don't have to do all the work of finding the motivation to get moving on my own.

Page 295: If he's going to insist of keeping my trigger foods in the house, he should have the courtesy to lock them in a freezer in the basement and hide the key.

Page 421, Appendix E: In the event that I find that key to the freezer in the basement, and binge on all the food in there, he should look suitably apologetic, and freakin' *get it*, that I *don't want these foods in my house!*

I think you get the idea.

By the way, my husband only knew about the manual after a violation of one of the dictums set out within. As you might imagine, it wasn't a pretty revelation.

Oh, and here's what happened with that key. I would listen carefully for the clicking sound of the freezer lock and then for any other sound that would hint at the location of the key.

Once, I heard a clank, which told me that it had been placed on metal. Sure enough, I found it hidden on top of a vent running along the basement ceiling. I can tell you there was no marital bliss that night.

He learned fast and hid it better after that. When I heard the creak of the second step into the basement that told me that he was on his way down for a Hostess cupcake or a brownie square or a double-chocolate chunk muffin, I'd tiptoe into the hallway above the stairs into the basement, lie down, and press my ear to the floor. This time, though, was no sound to tip off the location of the key.

After he was safely snoring on the couch, I'd enter stealth mode and sneak down into the basement, stepping over squeaky step number two, and I'd get down on my knees looking for the key under the freezer and under the treadmill, then I'd get up on my tippie-toes, feeling for the key above the freezer and above the treadmill, running my fingers along the wooden rafters of our unfinished basement ceiling. When I got stabbed by a sliver of wood, I entered a near-murderous rage.

I was mad that he'd hidden the key so well I couldn't find it. And I was mad when he hadn't hidden it well enough.

He couldn't win, and he didn't.

I couldn't win, and I didn't.

Our marriage couldn't win, and it didn't.

One of the most famous lines ever written came from Jean Paul Sartre's one-act play *No Exit*: "Hell is other people."

But I was the cause of this hell. I felt like I was in hell and I'm sure my husband did too.

We may feel justified in having such expectations of others. In fact, it may even feel like an act of self-regard, like a statement that we're taking care of ourselves.

But manuals like mine leave us frustrated and at the mercy of others if they don't play by our rules. We think that if others would just follow the manual, then we could be happy, or stay on a diet, or stop bingeing, or lose weight. We tie all of our emotional life, all of our actions, all of our success, our failures, the results that come out of the actions we take, to whether or not another person follows the rules in our rulebook and, in doing so, we give *them* all our power.

In the next episode, I want to show you how to take your power back. I want to show you how to act from a far truer place of self-regard when it comes to other people.

For all my talk about self-regard, you may not yet be convinced that you're worth it.

But that's okay. I'm pretty stubborn, and I descend from a very long line of stubborn relatives and ancestors. I don't give up easily. I love fiercely. And I plan to look into every crevice of bingeing or overeating and to sweep out the shame. Then I'm opening all the shutters, pulling back all the drapes, and opening all the windows. And you know what? I'll take the roof off if I have to.

Why?

Because when you're truly living from a place of self-regard, you won't feel like there's no exit.

Why not?

Because so much is open and free and flowing that you likely won't need an exit.

But if you do, you can take it in your own time. Until that time comes, I want you to try to let self-regard be the foundation of your experience. It might feel awkward. You might even hate it and unsubscribe so you can be done with me and my message.

Whatever you decide, my hope is that one day, through the open shutters and drapes that its warm yellow rays will touch you and melt you.

My hope is that you will let its fresh breezes to caress you.

And my hope is that you will look up to the heavens and sense that you are held safely in something bigger than you may know, something that's worth fighting for.

That's it for Episode 29. Thank you for listening. If you're ready to take the next step in your journey to end your struggle with bingeing or overeating, I've got exciting news! I'm offering a new way to work with me in the new year, and I'm going to share more about it in next week's episode. This is going to be a space where we study and apply the concepts in *The Done Bingeing Podcast* and so you can take your eating and your life to the next level. Stay tuned for more details next week!

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.