

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 65: WHEN YOU FEEL A BINGE COMING

What do a bathroom huddle and a 50-yard run have to do with you and binge 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 an evidence-based, 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. To find out more, go to www.holdingthespace.co and click Programs.

And now, your host, Internal-Family-Systems-Level-3-Trained and Master-Coach-Certified Martha Ayim.

Hey friends! Welcome back!

September is in the air—my 13-year-old son begs me to stop saying that because, for him, it's back to school! Next month is a time of change for many of us. Seasons are about to change. And, depending on where you're located, you may be shifting from summer routines to school routines or ending one school term to enjoy a break; you may be having the kids home less or having the kids home more; or any number of other changes.

Change can be difficult and the stress it often brings can result in a higher risk for binge eating. There's never been a better time to join my Done Bingeing Membership. Sign up for September and learn how to navigate challenges like these and others with less food, or without turning to food at all. Go to www.holdingthespace.co/membership to join now.

Alright, the last episode wrapped up the series on food and other people. That series began with episodes 29-34, and episode 64 was the finale.

I'm back with episode 65 and . . . a change.

You may have noticed, although I hope it hasn't been distractingly obvious, that I write a script for each episode, which I read, while trying really hard not to sound like I'm reading.

Like that . . . and like this:

I drive my colleagues crazy when I write out every word I intend to say. For the longest time, they've asked me to risk going off-script and for the longest time I've wanted to try. Well, now it's time for me to learn how to gradually pitch that script.

Although, not quite yet! I'm totally feeling clingy but my commitment is to letting it go more and more.

I know the binge eating journey inside out. I have lived it—most of my nearly 35 years as a binge eater, I spent at rock bottom. I have recovered from it. And I have studied it.

I created this podcast to support you as you heal binge eating too—and that won't change.

What *will* change is the pre-crafted words, drafted, scrapped, rewritten, revised, rechecked, recorded, re-recorded with countless requests to my incredible podcast editor, Daniel, to edit, edit, edit. He is *the best* and I just adore him and so appreciate his years of patience, support, and encouragement. Listen, if you're thinking of producing a podcast, he's your guy. You can find him at rothmedia.audio.

I know that a lot of my neurosis with so much revisioning has been about wanting it to be perfect—to try to never disappoint you or me.

Well, the timing of my tossing the script is *perfect* because this episode is about what to do when you feel you won't be able to have a day without bingeing, or without going off a diet or protocol. Those days don't feel so perfect, do they?

Thinking in terms of perfect or not usually leads to all or nothing thinking AKA black and white thinking.

Listen to these: "I just had a bite of cake, so I may as well eat *whatever* today and start again tomorrow" or "I know I'm going to binge, so I may as well make. it. count."

Do either sound familiar?

Possibly both?

When we think in the colours of black and white, we miss all the shades of gray in-between. And, *no*, I did not say we miss all the *50* shades of gray in-between.

Let's look at a few of those grays.

If you're sensing an oncoming urge to binge and that you don't think you will be able to stop it, there is still so much possibility in every moment leading up to a binge.

As I offer these five ideas, remember to personalize them in whatever way feels right for you.

1. Take it 90 seconds at a time

Listen, emotions tend to peak about every 90 seconds, so it can be helpful to just focus on 90-second windows when you feel the binge coming. You know when life hits you sometimes and you take it one day at a time, it's kind of like that except in shorter segments

I once went to a workshop with Gabor Maté, a Canadian physician and renowned addiction and trauma expert. He asked me to notice that I had an urge before I binged. In fact, he was the one who taught me about my urges. You may have heard me refer to a physician earlier in my podcast in some of my earlier episodes. That was him. I had never heard about the urge that preceded the binge. I just thought I was bingeing and I had no idea why it seemed to come out of nowhere.

After he taught me that, he invited me to try to make it through 30 seconds and just be with my urge for that long and see what happens. So, I could make it through five, that's all I could do. I knew before I left the auditorium, I'd never make it to 30 but I knew I would try for as long as I can, and I gave myself permission to do it for five seconds.

It's kind of like when I first started running, I made it 50 yards down the street about five houses. If you must know, before I keeled gasping and no, I'm not exaggerating, but that was the start that ultimately allowed me to build to 18 K runs.

However long of a window you're able to allow, that's a wonderful starting point.

2. Notice shifts in the intensity of your experience

It can be really helpful to put numbers to this, to rate the intensity of the urge from zero, not there at all to - 10/10.

Like my experience of being yanked into a UFO and there was nothing I could do about it. Even grabbing onto a tree, wrapping my arms and legs around it. Nothing could prevent that UFO from tugging me up into the spaceship. That's like a 10 out of 10, or it can be like a one out of 10.

“Meh, I could eat a cake.” You see the difference? See if you can notice the intensity of your urges when you first start to notice and see if the intensity changes over time.

What comes up for you as you notice this? One of my clients stopped bingeing almost immediately when she noticed that her urges had an intensity of about three to four out of 10 and lasted four less than a minute, that's all she needed to know.

It was data she never had before, because she was like me.

There was the urge and like, that's it.

I got nothing.

We're going to binge.

She didn't know the data about her urge that allowed her to say, you know what? I'm actually okay with this.

I don't love it, I wouldn't pick it, but I'm okay with this.

Now that might not be your experience and that's okay.

I just want to offer how powerful this step alone can be.

3. Be curious about the emotions you're noticing in your body and the physiological sensations that accompany them.

Try to focus only on these things in step 3.

Don't worry, step 4 is all about noticing the thoughts you hear

Maybe you'll experience something like this ...

I'm tuning into my body and I feel a cavernous pit in my belly, even though there's a lot of food in there already, it feels kind of empty.

And when I tune in there, I just notice, oh, there's some sadness below that I didn't even know was there.

I spend some time with the sadness and I notice, oh, there's like a fullness behind my eyes.

And now my jaw is getting a bit sore and my throat a little bit swollen. And oh, here comes that ache in my chest.

That is my telltale sign of sadness.

What happens if I just stay here a little longer?

The sadness seems to ease a little bit.

The sensations that accompany the sadness seem to ease a little bit.

And then what else happens?

Do you see what I mean, start with what you notice. And follow it until an organic conclusion or a resting place that feels right for you.

It's often the case that our emotions turn into physical sensations and those emotions morph into other emotions and it can kind of be like riding a wave.

Or, if you've ever hiked up mountains and done the switchbacks.

You follow the trail for a certain amount and then it switches and it's like, oh, that's interesting.

Now this is another part of the trail we're switching back in the opposite direct direction, but still moving up that's okay.

Allow the experience to be what it is for you and just notice.

4. Be curious about the thoughts you hear—even if they're not supporting your intention to notice, 90 seconds at a time.

You may notice thoughts you egging you on and saying something like, "stop listening to these stupid ideas! Who *is* this chick anyway?"

If It feels right for you, you can say something like, "Listen, I heard the thought that's saying . . ."

Being seen alone can be hugely settling.

Even if there isn't an instant resolution to a dissonance between thoughts you're experiencing and hearing.

Can you remember moments in your life when this happened for you when you were having some kind of a conflict, didn't have to be heavy duty, but some kind of a conflict with somebody else and they just stopped.

They didn't completely drop their argument, but they decided to just listen, like genuinely listen to what you had to say.

Whenever that's happened to me, I usually put my earrings back in, because I usually take them off when things start to heat up. I unroll my sleeves because I usually roll them up when things start to heat up.

I just like to calm down and it doesn't mean that I drop my point of view or argument either, but I settle a little bit.

I soften a little bit.

I can see there's more possibility with the person I'm with just in our softening with each other and listening to each other, and the same as possible with your thoughts when you just hear them.

I heard that.

Now, another question you can ask is, “How is this thought trying to help me?”

Genuinely listen for the answers. Do they make sense to you in *any way*?

Even if you really want to be focusing on allowing 90 seconds to notice what's happening for you, and this is the thought that's like, H-no, this is like a dumb idea.

Even with a thought like that, does it make sense to you in any way that your brain would *offer* that?

Just as one example, maybe your brain's offering that because it's worried, here we go again.

We're gonna allow the urge.

And that means we suffer longer and maybe it's like a thought pattern that's really scared about being uncomfortable.

Really scared about emotions that are tougher to feel.

And if that makes sense to you, let. it. know.

Even if you decide to interrupt that model right on the thought line and not follow its direction..

In other words, even if you notice the thought and then pause before it creates the emotion.

Like, antsy, nervousness, anxiety, fear, terror sometimes.

Even if you interrupt the model before it goes to creating the emotion, you can still let it know, “Listen, I get why you would be offering this to me brain, I really get it”.

Sometimes thoughts like these get dismissed at best and judged at worst—and it can even happen with those we turn to for help. Your brain may be moved by your effort to understand. Sometimes, that's enough to soften it even in the moment, until you've had time to spend more time with this thought pattern later.

5. Look for a need.

As you piece together what you noticed in the first four steps, you may have detected a need or two. If not, be curious about whether this desire to binge is really trying to address a need of some kind.

Sometimes I needed to feel safe, and to do that I had to get the blank away from food as fast as I blanking could.

I'm trying really hard not to swear. Can you tell, I'm the granddaughter of grandparents who swore like truckers and they actually were truckers for part of their lives. And anyway, cursing is kind of in my genes. But I'm trying really, really hard.

So, Sometimes I would literally throw my food down.

I'd throw the dishes down *anywhere* I noticed that I was about to binge anywhere I could see myself getting the food ready.

I would throw it down and sprint.

This is where my training for a marathon really came in handy.

I would run to the furthest place I could get to in my home.

Sometimes I would crawl under the covers.

Sometimes I'd huddle on the bathroom floor with my arms wrapped so tightly around my knees.

Sometimes that's all I could do.

Sometimes my butt got sore on the floor or I got bored in bed and I ended up organically getting on with my day.

No, It wasn't super glamorous, but I was surprised by how much this helped me. Unless the place was on fire, I'd stay in those positions until the urge had eased or passed.

Sometimes I still binged, but often the amount was way less.

And even if it wasn't, I was more likely to be conscious as I ate and that consciousness fostered courage in me to look more and more at different facets of my binging.

And when I remained conscious, there was so much I learned as I was binging.

What are some of the needs that you notice?

Do you need to rest your body?

Do you need to move your body?

Do you need to experience some joy?

Do you need more calm and less chaos?

Do you need a better understanding of what on earth is happening with your bingeing?

Maybe you notice something else altogether as you contemplate the needs you noticed.

As you contemplate the needs you noticed, is there *any* way in which you could meet some or all of these needs?

Even if it's for 5 minutes?

Listen, sometimes five minutes away from my son in the evening can be so helpful. He's stunning. He's beautiful. And he's 13 . And so this would be an example of me needing more calm and less chaos, five minutes.

Sometimes that's all it takes.

Would you be willing to stay curious about how you could continue to meet these needs more and more over time in a way that felt manageable?

Not an overstretch that you can't sustain, but something where you look at, if I could do one thing, and I know I'm quoting from a book and I can't remember at the moment what the book is - I will have it in the show notes.

There's this brilliant author who talks about, what is one thing that if you could change, would change everything?

For me, it was time.

Just a break from the chaos.

Just me focusing on myself, calming myself down, taking care of me.

So what would it be like if you took a manageable step to address a need in whatever way feels right for you? If you're willing to do this, what's the effect that you find of taking care of the needs that you're bingeing is pointing out to you?

Here's what I invite you to remember: Every moment leading up to a binge is full of possibility.

That's it for Episode 65. Thank you for listening! Remember what I said: September is a time of change and stress for many of us. Join my Done Bingeing Membership now to learn how to navigate challenges without resorting to binge eating. Go to www.holdingthespace.co/membership to sign up now.

Thanks for listening to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*.

Martha has the highest-level training in both the evidence-based Internal Family Systems approach and in life coaching, and she's available to help you stop bingeing. You can learn more about her programs by going to www.holdingthespace.co and clicking Programs.

Stay tuned for the next episode on freeing yourself from binge eating and creating the life you want.