

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 66: WHEN A BINGE IS HAPPENING

What do my mom's trip to Paris and a fist fight at the table 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, how are you? I hope you're doing amazing.

Well, September is here and my 13 year old son begs me to stop saying that because for him, it's back to school and let's be real, that is really hard for him. He's had a blast all summer playing with his friends, and now he's headed back to 10 months of mostly sitting at a desk learning.

Now, if you sensed air quotes, You're really feeling his vibe and he's not alone. For many of us, September is a time of change. Seasons are changing or about to, and depending on where you're located, you may be shifting from summer to school routines, or you may be ending one school term, taking a break before heading into another one.

You may be shifting from summer work weeks of four days to fall work weeks of five days, or perhaps the opposite or any number of other changes. Change can be difficult and the stress it often brings can leave you at a higher risk for bingeing, but you know what? I've got you. This is the perfect time to join my done bingeing membership.

Sign up for September and learn how to navigate changes like these challenges like these and others with less food or without turning to food at all. Go to www.holdingthespace.co/membership to join.

Alright, It is confession time. I played hokey last Monday. I actually used to do that a lot, especially in my last year or two of high school. My mom was a professor and every once in a while, she'd go on conferences and sometimes they were across the country or out of the country altogether. One time there was a three week conference in Paris. Although now I'm starting to think, are there three week conferences or did she just go to Paris for like one week of a conference, and then the other two weeks just to get a break from me?

I don't know. But listen, in those three weeks, I don't recall a day of high school because I don't recall going to high school. And to this day, whenever there's a gap in my learning, that feels pretty basic—like, the other day I couldn't figure out what the word was for when concentration decreases, because there's more volume to hold it. The people I was on the call with, had to help me out. And I was like, oh, I wonder if they covered that in those three weeks when I wasn't there.

So a message to my son, stay in school kid and don't skip like I did. Anyway, I know you are not judging me, this is a safe space. What this does is it brings back memories, somewhat fond, of the seemingly thousands of hail Marys my priest used to give to me after confessing week by week. So just to be clear, it wasn't a thousand or more hail Marys per week, I wasn't that bad. I'm thinking more thousands over the years of going to confession. Thank goodness for forgiveness. Anyway, I tell you this, because these are a couple more examples of not being perfect.

I seem to have a limitless number of these examples. And you know why this is awesome? Because this week again, we're going to risk the glimpse into imperfection. Remember we did this last episode and here's what came out of not hating, resenting or running from the intrusion of the drive to binge. We found the permission and space to do these things.

Take it 90 seconds at a time. Notice shifts in the intensity of your experience. Be curious about your emotions. Be curious about your thoughts. Look for a possible need. These five steps, hopefully allowed you to notice several things. That it's possible to be with the drive to binge, even for short amounts of time, that the experience of having that drive or urge isn't uniform throughout, that even powerful emotions can start to soften, when we're curious about them.

Even what seemed like the craziest thoughts on some level, probably make some sense. And that the drive to binge often steps in when one of our needs isn't being addressed. If you look more closely at these steps, what they opened up was this possibility waiting inside imperfection.

And how did all this happen? By leaning into curiosity, then leaning back to take in what came up for you. So we're gonna try this again this week. Okay. This time we're talking about when you've actually started to binge, so let's go back to last Monday. Here's what happened. It was a fresh start to a new work week.

I just decided to take it off. That might not seem like a big deal, but it was a big deal. I plan my weeks. I commit to my weeks. I have things that are really important for me to do because I care so much about

you and I wanna help you in any way I can, whether it's on my podcast, whether it's with my emails and social media posts on Facebook and Instagram, and even my podcast posts in Pinterest.

Whether it's joining my membership, whether it's private, whatever it is, like, it really matters to you that I'm giving my all in putting out content that's meaningful and helpful for you. And I just decided I wasn't gonna do it because I knew that where I was, I would do more harm than good. Or, maybe a better way of saying it is, I would be. I would impact my net productivity of the week as a whole, if I just kept working through Monday, when I just knew I was so off and I wasn't Um, and sick, there wasn't like, I couldn't say like, oh, you know what? I'm just so sick.

I did that a lot in high school. And one day I'll tell you how one of those experiences worked out. Okay, I didn't plan it this way. I didn't plan to take the day off. I planned to work and so that was a big deal for me. And what it did though, was it allowed me to come back to me in a whole new way that was grounded as I headed into the week and listen, believe me, my team appreciated it.

The memos I left, I was in a whole different place. And I'm sure they had a lot more fun, especially on Monday when I wasn't there. And so, boy, I'm talking and I'm realizing Brooke might not love this so much that I planned to work and I didn't work.

I kind of feel like whispering through the rest of this episode of the podcast. Okay, listen, I learned so many important things about myself and how I was really doing that that day. Even though at first, it really felt like I was veering off course. So now let's transition from that to seeing what might be possible for you.

If you might notice something that's not going perfectly like starting to binge or eating off protocol and see what might be available to you when it begins by feeling like, oh crap, here we go. This is not going the way I wanted. This is like, we're starting to fail or whatever thoughts you have about it.

I'm gonna talk about six steps.

Step number one, breathe. I know what you're thinking, really Martha? I can breathe without you telling me to breathe. I mean, really breathe. Take a moment to acknowledge what's happening. Okay? I am bingeing. That's what's happening right now. The reason why I ask you to really breathe and really acknowledge is because sometimes we feel so much shame that we try not to see our own bingeing.

So what I used to do was, I used to binge so fast so that I could hide it from myself. It didn't work by the way, I still was on to myself that I was eating a cake or two. It was an effort to get away from that shame. And so much was lost in that haste. And I'm not, I'm not looking back and hating myself. I just noticed the things I missed. And of course at that time, that was the best model I was in. That was the best my parts could do to help me. That's what I knew.

I learned to be curious about what might happen if I slow the F down. Because one of the things you might notice is something I wanna talk about in step number two. Do you notice any judgments that arise when you acknowledge what's happening? What are they? Probably bet my life that you're noticing at least one judgment.

How does it make you feel? Listen, judgements can be anything like girl, this is such a no. And it might make you feel impatient or something like that or off or something like that. And some are, you are such a total bloody loser. You are never gonna figure this out. Here you go again. Are you absolutely serious?

Like I just spent the last bloody week dieting or fasting or whatever it was or eating in a way that actually felt really good for me. Which doesn't mean that diets and fasting have to feel bad. It's just like, are you kidding me again? Like what is it going to take to stop this? And sometimes those hurt like the Dickens, right? So I want to invite you if it feels okay for you to take a step here and risk listening for if there is any level on which the judgements, even if they're harsh and hurtful, make sense that you would have them. It doesn't mean, Hey, let's bring out the harsh critic and let's just let it beat us up forever.

That's not what I'm saying. I'm saying, is there any level on which the harshness and the criticalness might make sense from some perspective? In other words, when we are our harshest critics, Underneath that is often like an effort to light or, you know, what's on fire, right? It's like something we know we really care about.

Something we know just feels so not right. And we know it's hurtful and it's like, now I'm remembering the days when my husband and I were together. So it usually went like this. I'd start by saying something very politely. Want you to know it's very polite, then I'd go onto repeating it.

Then I go on to raise my voice. And I might say, I've actually mentioned this twice before my mom used to always tell me when you're making a complaint, you always put the number in, I have been on hold for 31 minutes. I have emailed you five times about getting my money back, et cetera, et cetera. So I guess I use this in my marriage, right?

I have asked you three times about this and then. I just yell, then I'd scream. then I'd be passive- Okay, This is going farther than I intended you get the idea. Right. I would ramp it up if I didn't feel heard. And all that did was kind of shut him out even more. Cause now like who wants to respond to kind of like a screaming bitch, right?

Like who wants to respond to that? It is true that I didn't feel heard. And in some sense, It makes sense that I would ramp it up, but what I didn't see in that effort to get him to listen to me, was that I only made it hard on us. And I didn't show up in our marriage in a way that allowed him to respond if he was going to respond, cause we can't make people do things that they don't wanna do.

But if he was going to respond, I probably postponed it. Cause then he had to probably work through his wife, yelling at him, et cetera. Right. So it's like, being heard is a big deal. Right?

Remember last week when we talked about being heard and how it can just ease some of the pressure off. So when your thoughts, crazy as they might seem. Mean as they might seem, actually get floor time from you, remember does not mean, they get to like, just mow you over, over and trample you like a rug.

It means you hear what they say. Doesn't mean you believe them. It means you hear what they say. And it means you try to see if there's any way from any perspective that there is what they are trying to urge you to do. Makes sense. And my guess is it will make sense to you on some level.

Listen, you are so upset because I've been at this for years. I get it. And then what you can do is you can let it know, Hey, I get it. That's the listening we just did. We gave it the floor, listened and said, you know, I heard this about what you said. I really get that piece of it. And we can also let our brain know that when it judges us like that super harshly, or even just like, you know, girl, this is like a no right.

A little, um, what do you call those things? Like a little, it's not a jab. There's another word for, oh, oh, maybe this was covered in those three weeks of high school. Um, Poke like a little, a little like poke it's like you can let them know. Listen, I know you're trying to help me in this way. You're really unhappy.

You absolutely see the negative consequences on my life, but here's what I want you to know, brain. When you talk to me like that, even if you know, you're not trying to be super mean, that usually all it does is highlight even more that I'm doing something I don't wanna be doing. And then I often make that mean something, or I find it easy to make that mean something about me that then has me feeling worse.

And then, you know what I do when I feel worse, I eat more food because in the moment, this is still part of my pattern. I turned to food sometimes when I don't feel good about myself. Would you be willing to just ease up a little bit? I did get the message. I did hear you. And would you be open to considering easing up a little bit, cuz then I won't feel so bad as I'm trying to navigate this very moment when I've already started bingeing.

Okay. Step number three. Let your brain know. You're not gonna fight. Aha. I bet that caught your attention. Were you just checking the cyclist with a hot butt or planning your next haircut? Listen, if you were drifting off, you are busted. I still love you though. So why would we not fight the drive to binge?

Because what happens when we fight? we feel a pressure. We feel an aggression. We feel the conflict because it's not like the brain's gonna be like, listen, you shove me. And I'm just gonna like, fall back. It's like, you shove me. I shove you, right? Like, it's absolutely imperative that you hear what I say so you shove me, I'm gonna shove you back and possibly harder. It's like, no.

We have probably tried fighting this drive for so long. And my guess is maybe sometimes it worked, but if it worked, it probably didn't work for very long because usually that's willpower at play and willpower

can only be sustained for so long. So again, as we talk to our brains, we can say, listen, I'm not gonna fight with you.

Right. And because that doesn't usually end up getting anywhere. Like I just get mad at you. You get mad at me. I get mad at you and we don't like each other so much and it creates more negative emotion with me that I then turn to food to help us wage. Okay. So. Ask your brain, if it would be open to letting you try something different for today, or maybe for a couple of days, maybe for just this one instance, maybe for a week, because you can always reassess and notice what we're doing is we're building a level of trust with you in your brain.

Establishing a level of trust with my brain, even though I never had these words at the time in my bingeing that probably cut out mm, a quarter, I wanna say of my bingeing. So an example, this is like a focused example. It's like a little bit away from what we're talking about, but just to tell you what I mean, it's like, I used to panic when I would get hungry and I would just binge.

It was like I learned to tell myself, listen, honey, we're just hungry. And we're 10 minutes from home. The heat on the walk took so much more out of me than I expected. And I'm hungrier before I expected. I didn't pack enough lunch, but listen, we are on the way home. And here's the thing I want you to trust in me.

I promise you. We are never going to go on a diet again. And at that moment in my life, that just felt so right. Because all of my diets, even the ones that were reasonable or "sensible" and they were honestly, they were way, way better than the fad diets. I tried the diets where I was like, so hungry all the time or so unsatisfied or eating food I really didn't like or packaged food with probably not much nutrition, but did hit the macros and all of that. It always felt like such an, I don't know, like not me, not healthy and even the reasonable diet I was still hungry on. So I promised myself I would just never do that. And at that time it was totally right for me.

And then I calmed down so much and then I would have access to. I can make it home or okay. I can't make it home, but I'm right across the street from a Timmy's. I'm pondering whether I should bring up a Canadian story about Timmy's when it used to be ours, launched and owned at first by a hockey legend from Canada, Tim Horton.

Okay. Anyway, I'm not gonna go there. So what I learned was earning the trust of my brain, talking to my brain, helped me calm down and gave me access to new things that I didn't have access to before. Because, before this is what would happen. I would feel hungry, my lower brain would panic because it assumed, of course it had learned this from my pattern that I was hungry so much of the time unhappy with what I was eating, et cetera.

We alleviate that by bingeing. Temporarily each time it worked, which is part of why it made my bingeing so intractable, so difficult to change because the bingeing delivered on the promise in the moment. So, ask your brain, if this feels right for you, if it would be open to trying something different and just seeing

if it will trust you, even for five minutes, even for one episode of bingeing for one day, et cetera, letting it know you can reevaluate together.

All right. Number four, acknowledge any mixed feelings. They're mixed feelings, right? Bet you, it almost feels like a fist fight at the table. Probably a part of you feels. Resign, determined, driven or even excited and relieved to be bingeing in the moment. Right? Or eating off protocol in the moment because not everything is a binge, right.

But eating off protocol and listen, the reason why I include eating off protocol is even for people who don't meet, like the diagnostic criteria for being a binge eater. And remember I'm a coach, not a doctor, so I don't have the qualifications to diagnose, but even if we don't meet them with someone who does have the qualifications to diagnose, or we educate ourselves and like to make some sort of best guess self assessment based on what the criteria are.

Even if we don't meet the criteria, we may still have an internal experience of feeling out of control, eating more than we want to, eating a type we don't want to, eating at a pace that is just wouldn't be considered typical in a typical situation. Do you know what I mean? Like we're not in an eating hot dog contest, for example, right.

Or we're not in, it's not like a major holiday, or whatever times when you might, give yourself the space to eat differently or you might not. Right. So it's like, we really, even if we don't meet those criteria, we can still feel internally. Like the experience is like bingeing, right? So sub-threshold bingeing, below threshold bingeing.

Okay. So that's why including eating off protocol. Because sometimes it can feel the same way even if objectively, no one would say you're Bingeing. Okay. So one part might be feeling resigned, determined, driven, even excited, relieved about the way you're bingeing. And we talk about this a lot in our membership. You don't judge an emotion by what it sounds like because sometimes excitement or relief can lead to bingeing. And we never know until we run the full model, what do we do when we feel that way? Based on the thought we're thinking, what are our actions? And what's the outcome in the end?

You may have another part of you that feels the opposite, angry, resentful, frustrated, despairing, judgemental about the bingeing, right? Do these two sides make sense of you? Like, does this internal strife, does this conflict make sense to you? And I bet you on some level it does, right? Because you don't want to be eating this way.

Otherwise you wouldn't be listening to this podcast. And yet you are eating this way. And so it's like, there's a clear conflict there. So, let both sides know. And you can be as explicit as you want to. You guys in there, I hear you. I know part of you is super excited to be doing this cuz we just gave the green light. We're gonna throw in the towel. Now we feel relieved and now we're gonna binge. Right. And I hear the other experience I'm having here where there is still some despair about this happening or whatever your mixed feeling is. Let your brain know.

You're hearing it from both sides. Remember again, the power of being heard. Let your brain know you hear okay.

Step five, try to slow it down. You see what I did there? Okay. Steps one to four, we're about trying to give you the space to try slowing things down. When you really breathe. When you talk gently without harsh judgments or with any harsh judgments that are there when you let your brain know, listen, you're not planning to fight.

And when you acknowledge your mixed feelings about this, you may be able to relax a little bit while you're eating and slow this down.

Number six, eat with fierce compassion. The first five steps were essential, right? If we're hating ourselves and bingeing so fast that we won't even notice, like just trying to get away from the shame.

We're not breathing. We're not noticing, we're not acknowledging the pain of the shame. Why the message in the shame kind of makes sense on that. Not one level, even though we're not gonna follow that and like, you know, cave to feeling shame, we can be compassionate with why we would be thinking of thoughts that would generate shame.

You see what I'm saying? When we do all of these things, acknowledge, acknowledge, acknowledge, right? Like I get that. You're offering me these thoughts. I'm not gonna fight with you. I get that. There are mixed feelings about this slowing us down. This is what opens up the space for self-compassion.

And remember. Step six is eating with fierce self-compassion. This is active. Self-compassion. This is tenacious self-compassion. For example, give yourself permission to notice any joy you're getting or not getting from the food. What do you do? Would you be willing to allow yourself to take in the joy, even if you know the joy isn't coming from the food, the joy is coming from the thought you're thinking about the food, which is creating the joy.

Regardless if you're in that model, would you be willing to give yourself permission to be there while you are. So, what would happen to me is I would totally miss all the joy and, oh my goodness. I talk with so many clients about this, right? We eat so fast. I was just trying to get away from the shame of my bingeing and then I'd be done the binge and it's like, well, that didn't like that actually didn't feel

I don't notice anything. I don't. That wasn't as fun as I thought it was gonna be. That wasn't like, I don't even feel satisfied even after the food I ate and that that's typical food I would eat when I'm bingeing. And it's because I didn't give myself permission to notice anything I was doing because I was trying so hard to fight what I was doing.

But when I started to just notice, okay, you know what? This tastes good. I know there's no nutritional value in this. And I know there will be some consequences for this, but in the moment I do really love

this food. What that opened up for me was more space to enjoy it and not looking for a second binge or even a third binge.

And this is very common with Bing eaters bingeing again, cuz we didn't feel satisfied with the first one. Right. I'd be more likely to feel satisfied, fulfilled with the first. That might not sound like a big deal to you, but if you're like, I don't know, everybody's binges are different, like a thousand calories, 5,000 calories, more per binge.

That's a fair number of calories. Okay. So that's one. What, one thing, what do you not like when you treat yourself with tenacious self love? How can you address this? Would you stop eating it? Would you trash it? Would you allow yourself to get the quality of it that would allow you to really enjoy it? Now that sounds risky, eh, like that might sound like we're giving ourselves permission to binge.

That sounds like such a bad thing. And we often feel really judged for doing this as if we are like, not keeping a commitment to ourselves or whatever, but notice what I'm saying here. I'm not saying like let's binge all the time. What I'm saying is if it is already happening and despite the steps I offered.

The last episode of when you feel a binge coming on, it's happening now? What? So notice we can still be there for ourselves when we binge, if we follow the first five steps. And what does that look like? What does it look like when you treat yourself with tenacious self love? Because what I would notice is, let me give you an example. Like one, you know, like there's like a typical size chocolate bar, and then there's like, man, I haven't been to a candy store in a while. Extra? What are they called again? The chocolate bars that are bigger, right? Uh, jumbo. Is it jumbo or is that a cereal box?

You know what I mean? Like, there's the big chocolate bars and there's like the smaller chocolate bars. And it was like, when I ate chocolate bars that were just, they were okay. They were sweet, whatever I had the texture I wanted, but really they tasted like plastic after a few minutes. When I switched to chocolate I really loved, it made a huge difference to me. If I ate chocolate that, created in part by slaves. That was like a massive impact on my bingeing. A smaller amount of quality chocolate made from people who are actually paid fairly for their work. That changed my game. Both of those things really meant a lot to me. I enjoyed it more and I felt better as I was eating.

Okay. When we binge from self hate, like some of my clients even talk about this bingeing as a way of punishing themselves, we tend to eat way more because hate makes us feel horrible. And then if the action of bingeing is a way to punish ourselves, then of course, like, we're just gonna keep it coming.

Right. Because, we can feel so badly about ourselves for the fact that we're still struggling with this, that we feel like no amount of punishment is ever enough. Right? So many of my clients can relate to this. When you open yourself up to self love, even while you're eating in a way you'd rather not so much more becomes available to me, to you.

And it became available to me. For example, there's the way you started out eating or bingeing. What would be a more loving way? What would be the most loving way to do this? So my brilliant coaches were brainstorming with me about this, and one of them called this like a good, better, best option. And so her example was if you're craving a pizza, A good option might be adding veggies to the pizza, at least a better option might be eating half the pizza and a best option might be eating pizza with a cauliflower base.

Now, obviously those are based on certain things that would be meaningful to that person. Just like for some people fair trade chocolate might not be relevant to them at all.

Or something that they consider in a way that would shift the way they eat. And it's really important that this be unique for you. Okay. So you know what mine was so it wasn't like adding veggies, eat half a pizza and get a cauliflower base. Although that is a perfect example of something you might do.

Mine was two cakes and a carton of icing. Or one cake and a carton of icing or one cake with the icing that's actually on it and letting myself really enjoy it while I was eating it. I cannot tell you how many times I didn't need the second cake. I didn't need the added icing. I found cakes where the icing on it was good enough, right.

It helped me to choose a quality of icing that really shifted my experience of the eating and helped me to eat far, far less. So you see how unique these scenarios can be. Whether you wanna call them good, better, best, or you just call them like the way I'm eating now, a more loving way. The most loving I could possibly be toward myself as I'm.

All right. So if it feels right for you, you might wanna be curious about how self love might shift your eating. Even once you've already started to eat. Listen, I know these six steps probably felt counterintuitive, maybe a bit risky, maybe a bit dumb. And Hey, maybe some of you aren't even listening to this episode.

Listen, I get it. It's fine. I get it. And if something doesn't feel right for you, I invite you not to do it. In fact, that's one of the things I invite you to practice listening to the episodes is really trusting and balancing this place of curiosity, because you're listening to a podcast I'm guessing in part for companionship on this journey to listen to someone who completely gets this journey, has zero judgment about this and who might have some ideas that could help you.

So there's that kind of curiosity and openness that brings you here. And there might be some things that's like, you know what Martha's like really off our game this time or whatever it is, you feel honoring that too. And what's the balance?

And I'm actually gonna spend an entire episode talking about that balance and why it is so important, but I just wanted to say that for now. So listen, sometimes, as counterintuitive or as risky as this work can feel, experimenting in these very ways or other ways that feel right for you can be a total game changer.

That's it for episode 66. Thank you for listening. Remember what I said? September is a time of change and stress. For many of us. I am here for you, my friend, join my done bingeing membership to learn how to navigate these challenges without resorting to binge eating or at least. bingeing less, eating less.

If that's where you are on your journey. Right now, I am here for you. I've got you. Go to www.holdingthespace.co/membership to sign up now.