



EPISODE 82: REST, RHYTHM, RELIEF: THREE WAYS TO EASE BINGEING

What do WD40 and Tina Turner have to do with you and binge eating? Keep listening!

Welcome to The Done Bingeing Podcast. I'm Martha Ayim, your host and Internal Family Systems Level 3 Practitioner.

If you've tried everything to stop binge eating, but nothing's worked—or worked for long—maybe it's time for something different.

IFS is an evidence-based model recognized by SAMHSA and it's taking the world by storm. Why? Because it understands how overwhelming experiences like bingeing can really feel. IFS doesn't ask you to ignore, fight, or reason your way out of anything. Instead, it meets you exactly where you are—with genuine curiosity and compassion for every part of you involved. If you're looking for an approach and a host that totally get you, then listen in, my friend. This podcast is for you.

Well hello, hello, hello! Welcome back!

In the last three episodes, we've been talking about key things you can do that don't focus on food or exercise that can markedly shift bingeing.

Episode 79 was on adequate hydration, Episode 80 was on why your bingeing makes sense, and Episode 81 was on why you're worthy of respect and care.

Before I say more, I need to pause and acknowledge a key inspiration for Episode 81 that I forgot to mention. It was the work of renowned Canadian psychologist, Dr Jordan Peterson—in particular his chapter, "Treat Yourself Like Someone You Are Responsible for Helping," in his book *12 Rules for Life: An Antidote to Chaos*.

Okay, here are the 10 strategies we've been talking about at a glance:

1. Why your bingeing make sense
2. Why you're worth caring for
3. Getting enough sleep

4. Moving in ways you love
5. Ensuring adequate hydration
6. Addressing a stressor
7. Having fun
8. Dipping into a feeling
9. Being real
10. Giving yourself time

I've almost finished a free cheat-sheet for you for when we're done going through all the strategies. It's called *10 Quick-Win Foundations to Heal Binge Eating—Before Ever Focusing on Food*. You'll be able to keep it handy, so it's there when you need it.

In upcoming episodes, we'll be going through the rest of the tips. In this episode, we'll be talking about sleep, movement, and stress.

Getting enough sleep

So, tell me something.

If I highlight the importance of getting enough sleep, are you going to think, "Oh, that's simple, Martha. Consider it done and done"?

Or are you going to think, "*Really*, Martha? You're going to tell me to nap my way out of binge eating?"

Orrrrrr, are you going to think something that I couldn't say on this podcast without labeling this episode E for "explicit"?

Hold on, my friend. I'm not trying to be facile about how hard it can be to get enough sleep, and I'm not trying to suggest it's the complete solution to bingeing.

What I *am* trying to say is that when I was bingeing, sleep wasn't even on my radar. But it mattered. It mattered a lot.

Research from sleep genius Matthew Walker—basically the Beyoncé of sleep science—has shown that getting less than 7 hours of sleep can crank up cravings and seriously hamper your decision-making.

In other words, when you're underslept, you're practically hardwired to reach for cake over kale.

Walker suggests aiming for 7 to 9 hours of sleep a night. And before you roll your eyes and say, "Yeah, that sounds lovely, Martha, but have you seen my life?"—I hear you. Loud and clear.

If getting a solid night's sleep feels like an Olympic event you haven't trained for, just remember that naps count, too. Even short rests during the day can be a game-changer.

If it feels right to you, experiment. Try adding a bit more rest or sleep into your routine, even just a smidge. Notice how you feel afterward. Do you find yourself less tempted to dive headfirst into a bag of brownie bites? Does your brain feel less like a foggy and more like clear skies?

If so, fantastic—keep it up. And, if not, no worries—tweak it, try something different, or give it another shot on a day that feels a little less chaotic.

Remember, this isn't about perfection. It's about finding small, gentle ways to support yourself with enough rest.

Moving in ways you love

Alright, next up, let's talk about moving that booty.

Don't worry, I'm not about to give you a speech on why you need to sign up for a marathon or start bench-pressing your body weight. Honestly, I'm still traumatized from my StairMaster days, so I promise to keep this chill.

One of my coaches, Nicole Terwey, once told me, "Motion is the lotion for the body." And, boy, was she right.

Seriously, it's like WD-40 for stiff joints and tight muscles. It's even an elixir for anxious minds. And that's not all. Just five minutes can make a difference! That's about as long as it takes to decide what you'll watch on Netflix—or possibly give up trying.

What kind of movement feels genuinely good to you? Is it a slow stroll around your neighborhood? Gardening in your yard? Maybe some private dancing in your kitchen? (If the last one's your jam, start lining up that classic Tina Turner track.)

If you can take it outdoors, even better, but maybe not the private dancing part???

Robert Falconer—one of the wisest, kindest senior teachers of Internal Family Systems—calls appreciating beauty a "triumph of spirit." And nature? Well, there's beauty to spare.

Stepping outside, touching the grass, holding some soil, and, as you stroll, listening to the breeze, breathing the air, feeling the sun—that's not just good for the nervous system, it's downright good for your soul.

And there's solid science about movement, too: gentle, low-intensity movement—like walking, cycling, or even stretching—does wonders for easing stress and anxiety, and improving energy, mood, memory, cognition, sleep—even your immune system and bone strength! Being active can also reduce health risks like heart disease, diabetes, high blood pressure, and cancer.

Moving your body for a few minutes can also help you shift gears at those tricky moments when a meal ends and it can feel hard to put down your fork.

Notice that I'm not imploring you to hit the gym. Now, some people loooooove to hit the gym, so if that's you and this is all you needed to hear, grab your sneakers and gym bag and go for it!

But what I also want you to hear is that it doesn't have to be intense, and it definitely shouldn't feel like punishment. Remember how we talked about the importance of treating yourself like you're someone worth caring for? This is one of the ways that comes into play.

I used to run to teach myself a lesson—that pain would be the penalty for pancakes and pie.

Now I understand where that motivation came from, but back then I didn't see that all it ended up doing was make one part of me resent exercise and another part of me feel even more shame about my bingeing.

But when movement felt *good*, my whole system could lean into it.

Basically, gentle, regular movement keeps our bodies stronger, healthier, and happier as the years roll on—improving our whole quality of life.

So, if it feels right for you, try it out—five minutes of moving in a way that you love.

Notice how it feels. Does it shift something inside you? Does it soften a mood, does it ease an urge, does it make your spirit sing?

Try just five minutes, and you might find yourself coming back for more.

Addressing a stressor

Alright, let's shift into talking about stress, and let's be real about it—because I don't know about you, but when I was bingeing, stress and eating went together like macaroni and cheese—only way less tasty.

Seriously, stress is a huge binge trigger. It's what I hear from my clients all the time—juggling a job, a family, emails pinging at 10pm, a mountain of laundry that rivals Everest.

Is it any wonder that when life feels like a pressure cooker, bingeing feels like a release valve?

If this is resonating with you, maybe you'd be open to trying to ease that pressure in a different way.

Perhaps it makes sense to acknowledge that bingeing often tries to address after the fact what didn't get addressed before the fact.

And there's no judgment here.

Listen, I've caved to the boss, too—editing chapters at 11 at night, indexing textbooks at 2 in the morning, all the while jacked up on java and jelly donuts.

And I've had a baby, too, a little boo who began with a 45-minute nursing cycle, all day, all night.

And I've had a sink full of dirty dishes for days, too.

I really do get it.

But when I could begin to take any step toward addressing the stressor on the front end, I needed fewer and less extreme binges on the back end.

If this feels like something you'd like to explore, see if it feels okay to take a moment to find some stillness within yourself.

Try to gently connect with a sense of curiosity about a binge that felt like a response to some kind of stress.

What are you noticing as you do this?

See if it feels okay to ask what the part of you that binged wants you to know.

What do you hear?

What do you see?

I once did this exercise and didn't hear a thing, but I saw an image of a drab office with papers stacked high enough to teeter and a bare bulb dangling from a chain in the ceiling.

That wasn't what my actual office looked like, but, oh man, did I ever get the picture. That's what it felt like.

When I got that, I began to shift small things in manageable ways, and the part of me that binged noticed enough to begin to ease its foot off the gas.

Maybe a part of you will tell you about how the phone that rings off the hook right at 8:45 am—the second you enter your office, maybe a part of you will tell you about dinner that burns nightly at 6, maybe about the dog butt-scooting again on your favorite fair-trade, hand-woven rug. These are all clues, just like the ones I got about the teetering pile of papers and the dangling light bulb.

Do you remember in Episodes 68 and 69 when we talked about the needs inventory from the Center for Non-violent Communication? The CNVC suggests that we have core needs for connection, physical wellbeing, honesty, playfulness, peace, autonomy, and meaning.

Perhaps, if you try this exercise, you'll see or hear about something that's been missing in one of these areas, or maybe in another area altogether.

For me, indexing textbooks at 2 am definitely wasn't good for my physical well-being, nor was it good for connection or play (if you know what I mean).

What's one small tweak that might ease some of the stress you experience, even a little? Could you shuffle tasks around? Could you set a time boundary, like logging off emails a bit earlier—or taking a quick breather to step outside for five minutes? (Did you notice the nod to moving in ways you love?)

In addition to addressing stress on the front end before bingeing swoops in to react to it on the backend, something else that can really help is breathwork.

What I learned from Deb Dana and the Polyvagal Institute was that exhaling for longer than you inhale signals safety to your body.

You might want to try a simple breath pattern like this: inhale slowly for four counts, pause, and then exhale for six, pause, inhale slowly for four counts, pause, and then exhale for six—no fancy apps or mats needed. Repeat for two minutes and see how you feel.

The point here isn't to magically eliminate stress. It's about easing your stress so it's a little lighter. Why? Because easing the extent of the stress can ease the urgency to binge.

You deserve gentler days, my friend—and it's okay to experiment until you find the stress-addressers that work for you.

Well, that's 6 of the 10 foundations down, and 4 to go!

In the next episodes we'll be talking about having fun, dipping into feelings, being real, and giving yourself time.

As we pause here, I want you to notice that none of these foundations are about forcing change or fighting against yourself.

Instead, each one is an invitation—an opening—to listen with kindness to parts of you that have waited, perhaps for years, to feel truly heard and seen.

Maybe today you'll find yourself giving permission to move to your own rhythm, to ease a pressure that's been bubbling, or to tuck yourself in a little earlier.

And maybe tomorrow you'll notice the journey toward healing gets a bit easier, one gentle step at a time.

That's it for Episode 82. Thank you for listening! Remember, if you want to learn more about how Internal Family Systems can help you heal binge eating, why not sign up for a free consultation with me? Just go to holdingthespace.as.me/free30. That's holdingthespace.as.me/free30!

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.

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