

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 17: THINKING DELIBERATELY

What do Shakespeare and having sex with the lights on have to do with managing your mind? Keep listening!

Welcome to *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. This is the place to hear about how you can pair 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 17 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast*. Do you want to know why I'm so glad you're here with me every week? Because so many of you have been booking your free session with me and you're telling me that you're bingeing less *just* from listening to the podcast. I spoke to someone recently who said she'd gone from bingeing seven days a week to bingeing only once a week, after listening to the podcast for a couple of weeks. Another person said she listens again and again to the episodes that she needs to study, and her binges *and* her life have begun to transform. Nothing could make me happier. This is powerful stuff. Try not to be thrown off—like I was in the beginning—by its apparent simplicity. And by the way, don't worry if I say a first name on the podcast. Even though that wouldn't be enough to identify anyone, I change the first names to guarantee the privacy of anyone I speak to.

Okay, so let's get oriented for this episode. I'm a bit of a tangential thinker, so it may look like I've gone off the beaten path, but hang in here with me, I've got you. We're headed in the right direction! We've just taken several episodes to carefully consider what emotional eating is all about. We began looking closely at emotions in Episode 12 in a conversation about how to lose weight without triggering more binges. In that episode, we started to study why we have the desire to overeat in the first place. To understand that, we needed to understand the three main reasons why we have the desire to overeat: 1. we use food to anaesthetize painful emotions, 2. we're conditioned to overeat by society, and 3. our dopamine system gets hijacked by high-sugar foods. So, since then, we've been exploring the first of those reasons by taking a deep dive into emotional eating and emotions themselves—understanding them, choosing whether to eat them or feel them, creating them, and now we're ready to further explore the thoughts behind them.

I've been listening a lot lately to the lectures and podcasts of a University of Toronto psychology professor named Jordan B. Peterson. Here's something he said that I found incredibly compelling, and maybe you

will too. He said: “Everybody acts out a myth, but very few people know what their myth is. And you should know what your myth is because it might be a tragedy, and maybe you don’t want it to be.”

Peterson’s quote reminded me that our brain is the most powerful asset we have. Yet, left unattended, it will lead us down the path of least resistance, down a well-laid trail. Why? Because it’s easier. Because it’s more efficient. And because if you set your sights firmly on where you are want to go—for example, to a life free from binge eating or compulsive eating—you have to face where you are, which may be scared you-know-what-less of feeling emotions, of experiencing hunger, of being you, of living fully without apology, of facing the fact that you know you have so much more to offer yourself and the world, of facing the fact that the clock is ticking while you continue to live small—although perhaps in a big body.

When I stopped bingeing, I lost almost 100 pounds. I went from living small in a big body to living big in a small body. And a funny thing happened on the way down that scale. I was exhilarated for sure, but less than I expected I would be. It turned out that I was more scared going down the scale than I was going up it.

Going up the scale gave me places to hide. What could be better than a soul-sucking, brain-draining, energy-depleting cycle of bingeing and dieting? What better than an obsession about my eating and body and weight? What better than a perpetual sense of being stuck and confused in a dissonance and discord that grated my nerves?

Going down the scale stripped away my defenses, one by one. I had to face a very different kind of attention on my body, annoyed food-pushers in my life, people who liked me better fat, my own emotions that I’d been trying to eat away for decades, my own reluctance to live authentically, and my own responsibility to commit to creating the results I said wanted in my life.

On the way down the scale, I faced one fear at a time and kept on moving. I fell a bazillion times and I learned so much as each bruise morphed from a deep purple to a subtle yellow before it vanished into simple tenderness and then ultimately turned into a new strength and confidence. I found my way out. And you can to.

If you’re living a tragedy, that might be good to know. Why? Because you might want to change it. Here’s what I want you to know: You can be your own Shakespeare. You can write your own masterpiece. And you know what? You can start by sketching out a rough draft. It doesn’t have to be perfect. It just has to be *yours*.

Why would you want to write your own script? Here’s why: Because you want to live deliberately. Living deliberately requires you to live life thoughtfully, to live with awareness. The ability to be aware in this way is the privilege of being human—and as far as I know, it is shared by no other animal.

Consciousness is the treatment to end binge eating or overeating of any kind. When you are aware how your mind works, of how it creates your reality, of how you can direct it, you can completely change your life. If you’re bingeing, compulsively eating, emotionally eating, or overeating in any way, a significant part of your eating pattern is unconscious. It’s the way overeating in any form thrives. We’re deeply

unconscious in this area without even realizing it. It feels as if the overeating is just happening to you, that you have no control over it or over your weight.

As we've talked about in the last few episodes, you've probably been assuming that it's the circumstances of your life that have been making you feel the way you feel, act the way you do, and create the results you have in your life. Remember your co-worker's side-glance at your backside that you thought made you feel ashamed? The look that you thought made you eat four grilled-cheese sandwiches with extra-thick toast, fried in about a half a cup of butter when you got home? Which then made your butt look even bigger? The bad news about this scene is that you can't control where your co-worker lands her gaze. So, you go from gaze to grilled cheese. *That's* what it's like to live someone else's script.

When you live someone else's script, you may live in a sense of constant confusion, in a sense of discord because something isn't congruent with the way you really want to be. You probably drift in a sense of not knowing what's happening or why. You may stare down at a plate of crumbs and feel like you don't even know what happened. That used to happen to me all the time. Sometimes it would be icing smears in an empty box of donuts. Sometimes it would be chip bits at the bottom of a squeaky bag. Sometimes it was a pile of shiny candy bar wrappers.

But as you listen to this podcast, I want you to shift from a sense of "I don't know" to "I do know" or "I'm going to find out" or "I can take a guess" or "If I did know, what would it be?" I want you to be willing to be wrong, to be willing to learn from what went wrong, and to be willing to try something new. I want you to transform into a consciousness commando. I want you to honor your own wisdom. And you don't need any more knowledge to do that.

Remember the concept of self-regard that we've talked so much about? Well, the non-judgmental and compassionate witness that flows from that fierce commitment to treating yourself with dignity is all you need to make it happen. You're going to get better and better at accessing the perspective of the watcher—the vantage point from where you can watch everything, including what you're thinking.

One thing I know for sure, is that you're really smart. You come to my free coaching sessions and you blow me away with your insight. You're lawyers, doctors, professors, therapists, teachers, managers, executives, workers with your own expertise, stay-at-home moms, and you're all deeply thoughtful. You're clear on your what you're doing and on the repercussions of your actions. In other words, you're already conscious of your actions and results. But you're still stuck. Why? Because there's a difference between having an intellectual understanding of something happening and being deeply aware of your own mind's contribution to what's happening.

It's like the difference between having sex with the lights on and having sex with them off. Now, there's no judgment here, as you well know by now. If you want to get down with the lights off, you go right ahead. I'm sure you know what all the parts are and what's goin' on when you're gettin' it on. But if you were to flip that light switch, it'd be a whole other story—and I *know* you know what I mean. You'd get to know what's goin' on when you're gettin' it on in a whole new way.

I want you to flip that switch in your mind. Why? Because you need more than your brilliance. You need *awareness*. You need to see. How will you know when you've nailed it (no pun intended)? When you show up in your life in a way that propels you toward your goals and dreams. In other words, when your actions create results that you actually *want* to have in your life.

For the last few episodes we've been increasing your awareness of your feelings. We really took our time here because feelings are the reason for everything we do or don't do. Why are feelings the reason for everything we do? Because feelings inspire actions. Now, we're moving into increasing your awareness of your thoughts because you create your feelings with your thoughts.

So, put another way, we're working backward.

We know you want a life free from bingeing eating or overeating in any way, or you wouldn't be listening to this podcast. That's the result that you want to have in your life.

We know you have to stop bingeing or eating compulsively or emotionally to produce that result. That's the action you have to take.

We've begun to ask the question, "What emotions do you need to feel to take the actions you need to take?" That's the feeling you need to create.

And now we're asking, "What do you need to think and believe to create the feelings you need to inspire the actions you want to take to create the results you desire?"

Now, if that doesn't make total sense just yet, keep listening!

The more precision you can apply to watching the thoughts in your mind, and to choosing your thoughts deliberately, the better you'll be at creating the emotions you need to stop overeating and to live a life free from this obsession.

Remember, evolutionarily speaking, we were designed to be efficient to survive. If you go back to the time of the cave, we needed to expend as little energy as possible because we didn't know where our next meal was coming from. We wanted to stay in our comfort zone because it was efficient, and we're no different now.

Well, our brain was also designed to be efficient—to do what's easy, familiar, and comfortable. Our brain wants to do what it's already good at—which is thinking old thoughts that it's thought again and again. It resists change because that takes effort and energy, because it's less efficient, and because it's uncomfortable. You have to be willing to move into the discomfort to make the changes you need to make. The brain won't want that. So *you* have to want it.

Automatic thinking saves us a ton of energy. We probably have no awareness of the automatic thoughts we think when we get an urge to binge. We assume we just get an urge and we binge. But there's a thought there, probably along the lines of, "I can't handle this feeling" or "I just want to eat this so badly."

Unconscious thinking is easy, and it's what leads to the feelings that let us slide into bingeing. When you continue to think unconsciously, it's like living someone else script. Why write a new one, when there's one already there? When you think unconsciously, it's like delegating your thinking to your brain. But your brain just likes to think thoughts that it's already thought. Now that's great when it comes to walking, riding a bike, making a coffee, and driving a car because learning to do those things automatically allows us to focus on other things. But that's not great when it comes to binge eating, or when it comes to any other old, outdated pattern that isn't serving you, or when it comes to living your life in general.

Deliberate thought takes effort. But deliberately thinking new thoughts is worth it because it will set you free from your bingeing. When we learn something, it creates a very faint neural pathway in our brain. If we repeat it or add a significant amount of emotion to it, then it becomes increasingly automatic, unconscious, and effortless. And that's what we want: new, automatic thoughts that create feelings that steer us away from bingeing.

Deliberate thoughts are choices. And I have to credit my teacher, my coach, my mentor, Brooke Castillo, for helping me to understand thinking in this way. We can't just decide we want to have a thought, we have to actually program that thought into our brain and into our life with repetition. We have to literally create a new neural pathway.

A belief gives us a feeling of certainty about what things mean and who we are. If you want to know what your beliefs are, take a good look at your life. Your life is your beliefs manifested. What we believe cascades into how we feel, what we do, and what we create.

The reason why we delved into the desire to overeat in the first place is because when you stop overeating, you're just treating the symptom in a superficial, temporary way. It's the approach of almost every single diet out there. It doesn't treat the underlying problem, which is the desire to overeat. Addressing the desire to overeat gets to the root so the problem can be solved permanently. Anything you want to change in your life must be changed at the belief level if you want the change to last. You can't simply treat the symptom; you must dig deep and find the belief that caused you to get there in the first place.

For example, if you believe you're damaged somehow and you'll always overeat or be overweight, then it will be very difficult to permanently stop overeating and lose weight. Beliefs and reality like to reflect one another. When reality starts to contradict a belief, a discord enters our lives, which makes us uncomfortable. Let's suppose you do stop overeating for a period and lose weight, but still hold on to the belief that you are fundamentally flawed. Now, you have two choices to reduce the dissonance you feel between believing you're broken and always will be and the reality that you've stopped overeating and lost weight.

One, you can change your reality and go back to overeating and climb back up that scale. That way, you're back in tune with your belief that there's something wrong with you. Because most of us don't realize we have these negative beliefs in the first place, we have no choice but to sabotage our reality and gain our weight back. This is such a common dance of many of my clients. It's not until we gain awareness

of and deliberately choose what we believe that we can achieve any permanent results with our eating and weight. That's why we're doing this work in this episode, so we can take option number two.

Option number two is you change your belief system and embrace the truth that you're just fine. In fact, you're more than fine, you're amazing and can live in alignment with what you want to create in your life.

The reason we spent so long understanding feelings is that they offer a doorway into your beliefs. For example, if you feel defiant before you binge, allowing the feeling of defiance to unfold will allow you to access the thought causing it. Maybe that thought is, "I deserve to eat this." Now you have something that you can evaluate on a deeper level. Why do you deserve a six-pack of jumbo-sized cupcakes? What started out as defiance might reveal that beneath the defiance is anger. Now, if you can allow the anger to unfold, you can access the thought causing the anger. Maybe that thought is, "I have to take care of everyone else before I take care of me." Under the anger, you may sense an even deeper emotion of resignation. If you can sit with that emotion long enough, you can access the thought causing the resignation. Maybe that thought is, "I'm not good enough to be my own priority."

My mom used to have a friend who'd come to visit. Every once in a while, when my mom was talking, her friend would make this sound: beep-beep-beep-beep-beep. Eventually, after several visits, my mom asked her what the sound was for. Her friend said, "It's my bullshit detector."

Now I hope by now your bullshit-detector is going off load and clear. If you're thinking a thought like, "I'm not good enough to be my own priority," you've just found an incredibly undermining belief system.

So, first acknowledge and feel your emotion. Then, follow where it leads; it will take you to a thought. How has this thought been manifesting in your life? How does this thought make you feel and act? What do you create in your life when you feel and act in these ways?

What I want you to see is that every time you tell yourself you're not worthy or you're not loveable or you're a failure, you tell yourself a lie. And every time you lie to yourself, you deviate from your truth, your alignment, your accord, and descend into discord.

You might not even remember when you started to believe these thoughts. And it doesn't really matter. What does matter is that you have the power to choose to believe something new now. So, let's get busy choosing a thought on purpose that will help you create results in your life that you actually do want.

I want you to imagine you didn't have your old belief. Imagine knowing that you are worthy of deep self-care. Imagine knowing without a doubt that you are profoundly loveable. Now, imagine a vending machine staring you in the face at the end of a long day. A fierce commitment to your self-care and an unwavering belief in your worth will inspire feelings of strength and calm. The choice is obvious. The Kit-Kats that will drop with a bill and a press of B2 are a NO. Going home and eating a nutritious, satisfying hot meal is a YES. You wouldn't jump to the belief that you're not worthy of prioritizing your self-care 'cause it probably wouldn't occur to you. You'd be able to look at option B2 and C4 and D6 from a place of security and calm because you know you're worth more and you're going to make sure you get it.

Let's uncover some of your current beliefs by asking some questions:

- What do you believe about your eating, whether you're bingeing or overeating in any other way?
- What do you believe about your current weight?
- What do you believe about your worth?
- What do you believe about your life?
- What lessons were you taught growing up about your eating, weight, worth, and life?
- Why do you have the current results you have in your life?
- What do you believe about your ability to create the results you want?

Now, let's discover what you really want to believe by asking some more questions:

- What results do you want most in your life?
- What beliefs have kept you from getting these results so far?
- What would you need to believe to create the results you want?
- Why don't you believe this yet? What thoughts get in the way?

As adults, we can choose what we will and will not believe. We have the sacred, protected space of free choice over what we believe. No one else can truly touch the space that determines what we believe. It is for us and us alone. You can choose to believe that nothing and no one can take your dignity, your hope, your self-love, or your joy without your permission, because they can't. You can choose to believe that you are worthy, gorgeous, wonderful, able, and strong, because you are. You can choose to believe that you have the power of the universe behind you, because you do. And you can choose to believe in you, because you're worth it.

It's time to believe that truth.

It's time to go all in.

To put all the chips down.

Now, I'm not a betting girl.

But, if I were, you can bet I'd bet on you.

That's it for Episode 17. Thank you for listening.

The Done Bingeing Podcast is helping so many people to reduce their bingeing and overeating, and to find out who they're truly meant to be when they live their lives fully. The podcast has had 11,000 downloads, but only about 20 ratings and reviews. 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'd be honored if you would leave me a rating and review. Just go to www.holdingthespace.co/itunes-review for easy-peasy instructions on how to do it. 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.