

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 38: SPECIAL SERIES—12 KEYS TO END BINGE EATING, PART 4

What does a race on a dusty path have to do with ending 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 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 38 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast* and to part 4 of this special series, *12 Keys to End Binge Eating*.

I've been hearing from so many of you that returning to the foundations of how to stop bingeing and overeating in this special series has been really helpful.

So, I've decided to teach a free masterclass to dig even deeper into the essential steps to ending binge eating. But this masterclass isn't just about learning, it's also an opportunity to get live coaching from me—without identifying yourself if you'd prefer to stay anonymous. If you want in—and I'm pretty sure you won't want to miss this—reserve your spot now at <http://www.holdingthespace.co/masterclass/>.

Now I should tell you that this isn't going to be your average masterclass and it's not for everyone.

It's only for you if you're totally serious about ending your bingeing.

It's only for you if you're so tired of the looping, the spinning, and the rut.

It's only for you if you're done with living at only a fraction of your potential.

This masterclass is only for those who are completely ready to move on.

So, if that's you, go to <http://www.holdingthespace.co/masterclass/> to save your seat, and I will talk to you soon.

Okay, so let's recap where we are in this special series.

In part 1, we talked about the first key: Have Your Own Back.

In part 2, we talked about the second key: Treat Yourself with Dignity.

In part 3, we began a conversation about the third key: Ease the Pressure to Be Different. And I want to wrap up that conversation in this episode with some practical tips before turning to next week's episode on the fourth key, which is Eat Enough Good Food.

The reason I want to spend extra time on the third key is because at the beginning of the last episode, we devoted time to understanding setbacks—why they happen and what to do about them. Now, that was time well spent, and it totally relates to easing the pressure to be different, but I wanted to make sure that we still covered the third key in enough detail.

Last week we talked about how strong the desire can sometimes be to lose weight. This is even documented in the literature, which shows strong ties between binge eating and an intense concern with one's weight and shape, and strong ties between binge eating and excess weight or obesity (APA, 2013; Herpetz et al., 2011; Tanofsky-Kraff et al., 2013).

But that doesn't mean that every binge eater is overweight or that every person who is unhappy with their weight is actually overweight by *any* objective measure—we see that in the case of anorexia where a person can be severely underweight and be utterly convinced that they're fat.

One of the benefits of ditching the ruthless critic that we talked about last week, one of the benefits of easing the pressure to be different than who and what you are in this moment, is that it opens up the potential to treat yourself and your body with respect. This allows you to release some of the negative emotion wrapped up in your experience of your eating. And since your emotions inspire your actions, this is *huge*.

Why?

Well, let me ask you this: Are you more likely to binge or overeat when you feel hateful or neutral toward yourself?

Neutrality doesn't tend to get much hype as an emotion, but it can save you from a 7000-calorie binge that takes you down for days.

So often I hear, "But, Martha, I don't want to be okay with my weight because then I won't be motivated to stop bingeing." But that is just not true. In fact, as I so often found out on this journey, the counter-intuitive opposite of what we're inclined to do is far more helpful.

In the moments when I was able to stop hating my body despite being a hundred pounds overweight, I didn't give myself license to binge. I gave myself space to figure out how to stop.

Finding that space is so powerful that for some people, when they come to see their weight as neutral, their binges stop instantly. And, at the very least, their bingeing resolves faster than when they keep insisting on hating their weight.

The way I got from self-loathing to self-regard when I weighted 225 pounds was by wanting to heal from a place of abundance, rather than from a place of scarcity. In other words, I didn't just wish for a loss of a hundred pounds. I started with a gratitude for the countless ways my body supported me and my ability to move and live and love.

I also reminded myself that few women in the magazines and movies I saw actually looked like that in real life, and that our cultural expectation of thinness is little more than a whim of our time and our land, not an objective or permanent standard of beauty. That gave me a little perspective.

I also eased the pressure to be different by giving away my scale and measuring tape, and by consciously avoiding mirrors until I was out of the habit of using every single solitary reflection and an indictment of myself.

I also bought clothes that fit me.

A couple of months ago, a client and I spent an entire session discussing whether or not she should buy a new pair of jeans that actually fit her. She'd recently binged after being out with her family and feeling the tight waistband of her jeans cutting in to her. It turned out that none of her jeans fit her. But she didn't want to buy a pair that would fit her because she worried that that would be rewarding herself for her bingeing. And if you're a Skinnerian, that would make sense, right? Why would you positively reinforce a behavior that you don't want?

I get it.

And so we very gingerly began the conversation. "Well," she said, "I *certainly* wouldn't buy a *nice* pair of jeans, but maybe I'd buy a cheap pair that I don't like." But when we talked about that option, we could see that that was just another way to punish herself for bingeing.

She'd set herself up so that she couldn't win—either she continued to squeeze into uncomfortable jeans that she was embarrassed to wear, or she bought jeans that fit her but that she didn't like. Both of these options came from feelings of disgust and distress, which came from the thought, "I need to be different right now."

Luckily, my client was open to a third option—buying the nicest pair of jeans she could afford. She got to a place where she was at least curious about whether this might be worth a try. And so she bought her favorite brand and style in a size that felt comfortable, and she liked the way they looked on her.

Then a few weeks later, she reported what she described as "the strangest thing." The jeans didn't fit her anymore. They were too big.

I joked with her that if I told my clients ahead of time that the new clothes in a size that actually fit them might not fit them for long, they'd probably never give this a try!

Now, were the jeans a waste of money or were they an amazing investment? I'll let you to decide.

This is the power of easing the pressure to be different and ignoring the mean voice in your head.

Sometimes it doesn't feel possible to believe that your body is alright the way it is right now, and that's okay. For now, I'm wondering if you're open to believing this: "One day, I want it to be possible for me to view my body in a neutral way." If so, that's good enough to take you one step closer to self-regard in your current body and to bring you at least a measure of peace about where you are on your journey to end your bingeing or overeating.

Let's take another look at what happens when we keep the pressure to be different high.

Imagine stepping on the scale and it shows a number and you think, "I'm fat." A thought like that likely quickly descends into deep discouragement and sets you up for . . . you guessed it . . . a binge. The result is a strengthened neural connection in your brain anchoring the pattern of bingeing—not to mention the excess calories that will contribute to the weight gain.

Now if you step on that same scale and it displays the same number and you think to yourself, "I wish that was a different number, but this number doesn't mean anything about my worth. It just means that I have a body and it weights this much right now and I am going to keep working on figuring this out." A thought like this will tend to leave you feeling calmer, more focused, and more able to discern the most helpful next step for you to take. The result? You increase the likelihood that you'll find a way out of bingeing, you decrease the likelihood of reacting with a binge in the moment, and you weaken the neural connection anchoring your bingeing.

There's another advantage of releasing the pressure to be a different weight. Learning to ease up that expectation now, will help you to avoid getting caught up in any pressure you may feel at a lower weight.

If you're a binge eater or chronic overeater, you've probably yo-yo dieted and lost a lot of weight at least once. And if you're anything like I was, you probably thought that things would be so much easier when you weighted less. But was that true? Or did you just have a different kind of fear? Not the fear of being overweight, but the fear of re-gaining the weight—especially with all the attention you likely got. Not to mention all the questions about how you lost the weight. Or all the comments like, "Gosh, you look so great now."

Were you really free? Or did you just worry that, somehow, you'd be a disappointment to all those people asking about your weight loss if you gained it back? And did you wonder what people *really* thought of you when you were heavier? Maybe you learned that not everyone was thrilled by your thinness. Maybe you weren't sure how to respond to increased flirting and requests for dates.

The gift of easing the pressure to be different at your current weight is that it is a meta-skill that will serve you well all the way down that scale and long after you stop bingeing and return to your normal weight. Why? Because you'll have to manage your thoughts and emotions, which will allow you to be far more effective and empowered in every area of your life.

So, I know you want something to be different now. Maybe it's your weight. Maybe it's your bingeing.

I get it.

But think back for a moment to the tortoise and the hare, and the moral of their story.

You've heard it before, but I'll say it again.

Sometimes you need to go slow to go fast.

I know you want out of this eating pattern now. But the best way I know out is through. It's through staying in your own lane, going at your own pace, and letting others speed by if they want.

The tortoise's journey seems impossibly painfully slow. But the tortoise is just steady and focused and never quits even when the hare has left him in the dust.

So, remember this: even when it looks like you've lost, resist the temptation to lurch ahead with harsh self-criticism. Ease up on the need to be at the end of the journey now. Stay on the path. Stay focused on the path. And never give up on finding the next best step to end your bingeing.

That's it for Episode 38. Thank you for listening. I'm teaching a free masterclass to dig even deeper into the essential steps to ending binge eating. But this masterclass isn't just about learning, it's also an opportunity to get life coaching for free from me—without identifying yourself if you'd prefer to stay anonymous. Reserve your spot now at <http://www.holdingthespace.co/masterclass/>! You are *not* going to want to miss it.

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.

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