

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 39: SPECIAL SERIES—12 KEYS TO END BINGE EATING, PART 5

What do the sparkle and the splash of a glistening stream have to do with eating enough food? 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 39 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast* and to part 5 of this special series, *12 Keys to End Binge Eating*.

So many of you have been telling me that reviewing the central steps to stop bingeing and overeating in this special series has been timely, and I'm not surprised.

Why?

Because bingeing is a pattern that, over time, loops and spins itself into a deep rut. And when you manage to get out of it, it's often not long before you find yourself slipping back in, looking to find your way out again.

Some of you tell me that you're afraid you'll never be able to stop bingeing or overeating.

Some of you tell me that you're afraid that you may not even really *want* to stop bingeing or overeating.

I swung back and forth like a pendulum between both of these fears for years.

Sometimes I felt hopeless and helpless to end my binges. After all, I'd tried everything under the sun and nothing had worked or had worked for long.

Sometimes I felt terrified of what would happen if I *did* stop bingeing, because I felt like I *desperately* needed my binges to survive.

Bingeing was my enemy and bingeing my friend.

Nothing made sense.

Could I get out or not?

Did I want out or not?

I binged for more than 30 years and I've been through it all.

I get it. I get how bingeing can feel totally terrifying and totally comforting at the same time. And what that meant for me was that I was afraid to get help.

I was afraid to waste money on another program that would fail me and sink me deeper into despair.

And I was afraid to invest money in a program that might work and then take from me a vital source of joy.

So I get the fear. I know it's got you coming and going.

But what I'm trying to invite you to consider in this special series is this:

What if you could learn to not *want* to binge anymore? That would be different, wouldn't it?

It's one thing to be able to stop bingeing for a short time yet still have the desire to binge, the need to binge.

It's another thing altogether to no longer want to binge at all and not feel like you need it at all.

Now that's freedom.

What if you no longer thought ahead of time about what you might binge on later?

What if you no longer planned how you would sneak food?

What if you no longer had to compensate for all the downtime after a binge—the mental fog, the sugar coma, the splitting headache, or the upset tummy?

What if you were able to think about completely different things—*without missing the binge*?

That's what I want to offer you in this special series. And that's why I created a masterclass on how to stop bingeing where you can also get free live coaching from me if you want it. The spots go quickly, so if you're interested, reserve your seat now at <http://www.holdingthespace.co/masterclass/>.

Now, maybe you don't want to sign up for a masterclass because you're scared that I'm going to have the same-old approach that's going to take food away from you.

I'm not interested in taking food away from you. In fact, I want you to make sure you feel satisfied and energized by your food. And that is the focus of this week's episode on the fourth key to end binge eating: Eat Enough Good Food.

It feels terrible to feel deprived. How do I know? Well, I tried all those same-old approaches too.

But what if ending your bingeing and overeating wasn't about living with deprivation? What if the journey out of bingeing and overeating was grounded in thriving not depriving? *That is* the way out of bingeing. But it's not what we do and, often, that's not what we're encouraged to do.

A really interesting 2014 study showed that almost 40 per cent of participants had reported dieting in the year before the study began (Andrés & Saldaña, 2014) and that it was an unhappiness with weight that led to the dieting. The researchers also found that the dieting often triggered the bingeing and that those who had dieted were about twice as likely to binge as those who didn't diet (Andrés & Saldaña, 2014).

In other words, dieting is a predictable precursor for the onset of bingeing and a common strategy to try to control eating or lose weight caused from the bingeing. And so it's no wonder we find ourselves in the spin we talked about at the beginning of this episode, right? Dieting can both set the stage for bingeing and can seem like the best go-to after we start bingeing.

And all of this is often triggered by an intense focus on our weight and our shape. That's why we spent two episodes exploring the third key: Ease the Pressure to Be Different. If you can give yourself even a little breathing room around getting to your goal at lightning speed, you'll be less inclined to restrict your food. And when you don't restrict, you're much more likely to break the diet-binge cycle and you'll probably be more open to giving this fourth key a go: Eat Enough Good Food.

This fourth key to ending binge eating is so powerful that sometimes simply eating enough satisfying food is all you need to stop bingeing.

Now, here's what I find fascinating as a coach: one of my toughest jobs is selling my clients on their worth, presenting arguments that might allow them to open to the possibility that they're *worth* feeding themselves enough food.

Do you see how the keys to ending bingeing are starting to fit together? Maybe you were frustrated that I didn't begin this special series with directives, like eat this kind of food, witness your urges, and feel your feelings. I could have done that. But other programs do that. And any self-respecting program to end binge eating will insist that you eat sufficient amounts of food. That's not new. But you won't do that, or you won't do that for long, if you haven't worked on the second key: Treat Yourself with Dignity.

Feeding yourself enough food requires the self-regard that is the bedrock of that dignity. You need to believe that you're worth feeding yourself sufficient, satisfying food. When you do just that, your lower brain can relax and say, "OK, we're fed. No need to sound that alarm." And it'll probably call off—or at the very least—turn down the volume on that urge to binge. So . . . even if you've promised yourself that you'd eat nothing today but three almonds because last night you ate two boxes of Ritz, give yourself a real chance at stepping out of the spin by eating real meals today.

I believe that you can address weight loss after bingeing has resolved. But the research is clear, the dieting has to end first. What if you made your only goal right now to eat enough nutritious satisfying food, without focusing on weight? In other words, if you're trying to lose weight, would you be willing to

postpone that desired outcome for now, if it meant that you could resolve your bingeing and lose weight eventually?

Now, wait! As you ask yourself this question, remember this: Probably what's happening now is that you're in a diet-binge cycle or an undereating-overeating cycle and you're not losing weight *anyway*, and you may actually be *gaining* weight. So before you answer, think carefully.

Now, you've probably noticed that most approaches to ending bingeing are sketchy on the weight loss issue but heavy on the heart-felt encouragement to love your body as it is. And, you know I'm a big advocate of self-love too, but not if it's a way to *avoid* the issue of weight loss. If self-love is a way to come to genuine peace with your weight, to love you for the beautiful person you are, the exact way you are, the exact size you are, it's fine. Or if self-love to address weight loss, then that's another issue.

To be fair, the reluctance to touch the weight loss issue is probably driven by an awareness of the research that shows a strong correlation between dieting and bingeing. But that reluctance probably assumes that diets—external parameters of what you can't and can't eat—are the *only* way to lose weight, and that's just not true.

An internal GPS of which foods truly fuel your body and don't undermine your body's ability to send out its in-born regulating sensors of hunger and fullness is a whole other story. And that's what we're working toward.

Now, I get that if your internal world feels out of control as a binge eater, you're drawn to the promise of control offered by the externally imposed limits of diet. But that's just where you get constantly pulled back into the loop. You try to make up for bingeing by restricting. And so you probably don't allow yourself to eat anything remotely close to a real meal.

Maybe you opt for oatmeal from an envelope with skim milk and a few apple shavings. And you forgo a hearty bowl of steel cut oats with nuts and cream and a cup of berries.

Why? Probably because you're afraid that if you eat more than you're used to, you'll gain weight and then you'll never be able to stop and then you'll be completely out of control.

But do you remember when we talked about the difference between drama and math? Well . . . that's the drama. Here's the math:

Roughly speaking, suppose you aim for about 1200 calories per day—because you've heard more than a few times that that's a good baseline for the average woman to lose weight. Maybe each morning, you swear that you won't go over that amount, and you promise to try to shave off a couple of hundred more if you can by forgoing dressing on your salad or by ignoring the hunger clawing at your stomach.

Multiply 1200 calories a day by 7 days and you've got 8400 calories per week. That sounds pretty good, right?

But hold on! Monday and Tuesday are no problem. Wednesday, however, Frankie stomps off the school bus dragging his sister by the hair. She *ruined* his artwork, don't you know? Now the stabbing in your head makes the clawing in your stomach unbearable and you start bingeing on Wednesday and can't stop until Saturday. That's three days of 6000-calorie binges on top of your daily 1200-calorie diet. After a week of intended restriction, you've consumed a total of 26,400 calories, 8400 from your diet allotment and 18,000 from your binges. Divide your weekly total by 7 and you get almost 3800 calories a day.

If you're able to do this math and see what you're consuming week after week of promising to follow a diet, you might be open to dropping that diet. Think of it this way: According to the calculations we just did, even if you were to allow yourself 2000 calories a day, you'd still only be consuming half of what you're consuming now when you're bingeing.

Do you see what I'm getting at? If you're open to ditching the diet, you have a shot at stopping the diet-binge cycle and, counter-intuitively, you'll probably consume a whole lot fewer calories at the same time.

When I do the math with my clients, the numbers make sense. But as long as there's drama, it won't add up to a hill of beans, and they'll be back to dieting and bingeing the next week. Now there's no judgment here. They're human, just like I was human when I was in this struggle too. That's why mental and emotional management—the heart of true life coaching work—is so key to ending this struggle.

Now, I get that 2000 calories a day might seem like a lot if you've been trying to hold yourself to 1200, but part of what eating more calories than you may even really need in the long term is that it calms down your lower brain—the part that you sent into freak-out mode every time you return to a diet.

Why is your lower brain freaking? Because, as we'll discuss in the next episode in this series, one of your lower brain's main jobs is to keep you alive. And if it thinks you are remotely in danger of not getting enough food—whether or not you think you're on a reasonable diet or not—it will sound the alarm in the form of urges that scream for you to eat more food.

When you start your days from a place of abundance that comes from a calorie allowance closer to 2000 rather than from a place of scarcity that comes from a calorie ration closer to 1200, you can quiet your lower brain. And what I've found with my clients is that then, in time, food loses its absolute focus in their lives and they find themselves naturally eating *less without even thinking about it*.

It's kind of like the story I shared in the last episode of buying the beautiful jeans that actually fit you. You get to relax, the focus comes off the discomfort of tight clothes and growling bellies and, instead, alights on the spring that's almost here and what you might do with it.

Now, I used calories just to make a point. As a general measurement, the calorie provides a helpful comparison of overall quantity. But you probably know that a calorie does not equal a calorie does not equal a calorie. Maybe when your calories come from bagels and jam, you feel lulled into a lobotomized slump. Maybe when your calories come from a salmon-veggie sauté, you feel warmed into an energized pump.

And that's just how food affects your mind and your emotions. But what about your fat stores? We'll be getting into far more detail about this later in the podcast, but in a nutshell, food that spikes your insulin will decrease your body's ability to burn its own fat and increase your body's tendency to store fat. The foods that tend to raise your insulin the most are sugar and flour.

Now, here's why I haven't said a lot about this on this podcast yet: because, until I can inspire you to fight fiercely for yourself on this journey, and until I can persuade you to view yourself with enough dignity to feed yourself satisfying, nutritious food, and until I can convince you to ease your judgment of where you are right now, and until I can encourage you to release the diet mentality—hint, hint: these are the first four keys that we've discussed in this series—anything I share about sugar and flour, about food and fat storage, about insulin and another hormone ghrelin, just risks getting spun into yet another desperate diet.

Is what I'm saying starting to make more sense? I'm sorry I'm so long winded, but these concepts are nuanced and their simplicity defies their depth and power.

When you can manage your mind so that you don't create unnecessary emotional pain, when you can manage your emotions when life comes for you as it surely will, when you can skillfully stay present and aware of your moment-to-moment experience, when you can make choices and take action from a place of empowerment not from a place of disempowerment, and when you can take the drama out of the equation and just do the math, you can find your path to freedom from bingeing one step at a time.

I get that restriction seems to make sense. But it's like the water in the desert that you're sure is waiting to quench your thirst. You can hear it trickle, you can see it glisten, maybe you can even feel the faintest spray on your face.

But it is not what it seems.

Do you want to keep chasing after a stream that isn't really there?

Or do you want to face the heat and find a *real* landmark?

The sparkling stream is just a few strides away, and it's so alluring.

Finding what's real is further off, and isn't as exciting.

It's there, but it will take patience and courage to find it.

And *that* is the price of admission.

You can get a free pass to something that's not really there.

Or you can pay your way to something that is.

The diet will bring back to the ghostly brook.

Real meals will lead you on real ground to your next real destination on this journey.

That's it for Episode 39. Thank you for listening. For sure there've been times when you really wanted to binge, and you did. But there have also times when you really didn't want to binge, and you didn't. And it wasn't always because you were sick as a dog. Sometime you just didn't want to binge, and it was effortless. Don't forget that that has already been a part of your experience. That's what we want to foster. That's what we want to make automatic. And that's what I want to teach you in my masterclass. 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.

Reference

Andrés, A., & Saldaña, C. (2014). Body dissatisfaction and dietary restraint influence binge eating behavior. *Nutrition Research* 34(11), 944–950. doi: 10.1016/j.nutres.2014.09.003