

The Done Bingeing

PODCAST

EPISODE 41: SPECIAL SERIES—12 KEYS TO END BINGE EATING, PART 7

What do a bullseye and the Buddha, himself, have to do with urges to binge? 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 41 of *The Done Bingeing Podcast* and to part 7 of this special series, *12 Keys to End Binge Eating*. This episode focuses on the sixth key: Welcome Your Urges.

You might be scratching your head and thinking, “Welcome your urges? Are you kidding? They feel awful, and I’m terrified of them. They make me binge. Welcoming them is the last thing I want to do.”

I hear you. But when you feel terrified of your urges, you probably binge to make them go away, ASAP! So, that’s not working for you. How do I know? It didn’t work for me either.

So, here’s what I want us to do in this episode: I want us to take the power out of the urge by hanging with it. I want us to get up close and personal, and I want us to get way back and impersonal. I want us to zoom in and zoom out.

Don’t worry, if this seems scary, I’ll be right here with you. And if you’re not ready for this right now, that’s all right. Come back to this episode when it feels right for you.

Okay, so let’s start by zooming out.

I want us to step waaaaay back for the big picture of what’s happening objectively when you get an urge to binge. In other words, I want us to review the neurological perspective—what’s happening in your brain.

Now, you may recall that we just covered this in the last key to end binge eating: Understand Your Brain. So this will be a quick recap.

Your lower, reptilian brain sends out signals for anything it thinks you need to stay alive—and that includes food if it thinks you’re not getting enough. So if you’re severely restricting calories during the

day, you're priming your lower brain to scream for a binge at night. And this is the very pattern that many of you tell me is happening for you right now.

In addition to your lower brain signaling urgent messages to ensure your survival, it also tries to help you by efficiently automating patterns that it notices happen again and again.

So, for example, maybe you've been thinking thoughts like these for years: "I have no control over food," "I can't trust myself around food," "I'm powerless against my urges," "I need food to help me cope," "There won't be any joy left in my life without binge food," "Food is my best friend," "I don't know what else to do besides bingeing," "I'll never be able to stop bingeing permanently because I've never been able to stop for long in the past."

These thoughts are now automatic, top-of-mind, effortless.

They come to your mind the moment you step into your home after a stressful day at work.

They come to your mind the moment the baby *finally* falls asleep.

They come when your partner asks if you should really be eating that jumbo burrito you're holding behind your back.

They come when you're baking with the kids.

They come at the buffet table and in the corner store.

That's your brain.

Your brain is trying to help you by streamlining recurring patterns—including recurring thoughts—so you can reserve cognitive real estate for other complex learning and tasks.

This comes in super-handy if you've gone back to school to upgrade your skills. You need to free up some cognitive space to study and learn.

It comes in handy if the honeymoon phase of your relationship is over and now you're living with a *real* human. The shiny, glossy version who walked down the aisle with you is now simultaneously farting and snoring on the couch every night after dinner.

No, I don't have a camera set up in your house.

Yes, the nuptial bliss is now a blip in the mist.

What do you need?

Well, in addition to Febreeze, you need some real cognitive power *to deal*.

Your brain helps you carve that out by making efficiencies elsewhere, like by thinking the same damn thoughts about your eating, your bingeing, and your weight over and over. Why? Because those thoughts are *easy* to think.

Just how easy is it for you to think this: “My beloved’s farts smell like a dead rat in a heat wave, and that’s okay because I love him for who he really is deep, deep down in his heart”?

That thought took a little more effort to think, didn’t?

To be able to reserve energy to come up with thoughts like that to try to salvage the spousal connection, your brain needs to conserve energy elsewhere.

You can’t rely on your brain to decide *on your behalf* where to cut corners. You don’t want your brain to loop unhelpful thoughts about your eating because they’re easy.

You want to preserve part of your cognitive power to practice *helpful* thoughts about your eating that will eventually become effortless for you to think and that will allow you to make the changes in your eating that you want to make.

Although, right now, it feels like the urges and cravings from your lower, reptilian brain are running the show, that’s not actually true.

Your higher, primate brain is the seat of your ability to reason and your ability to make voluntary movements. And that’s where the command to cave to the urge and the demand to drive to Dairy Queen come from.

We want to train your brain to order different decisions and actions. And we’ll be focusing more on this in an upcoming key.

Okay, so that’s a recap of the view when we pull back to see what’s happening objectively from a neurological perspective.

Let’s begin the work of zooming in and taking a closer look at your subjective experience of an urge. But before we can do that, we need you to be willing to go there.

Right now, you might be pretty scared about snuggling up with the urge. But when you’re afraid of the urge, you’ll do the first thing that comes to your mind to make it vanish—and that, we both know, is eat.

Fear doesn’t help you visit with the urge. What emotions would?

Well, how about curiosity? How about courage?

What would you need to believe to feel curious about the urge? Maybe you’d need to believe that if running from the urge hasn’t helped for years—possibly even decades—that stopping to allow the urge might offer something unexpected and worth witnessing. Maybe you’d need to believe that if something’s come knocking at your door for so long, it might have something to teach you. Maybe you’d need to believe that urges don’t last forever. Maybe you’d need to be open to believing that it’s possible that, if you can learn to allow an urge, one day urges won’t have any hold over you at all.

What would you need to believe to feel courageous enough to sit with the urge for a while? Maybe you’d need to believe that the urge itself isn’t lethal. Maybe you’d need to believe that just because you feel

like you're dying when the urge comes, doesn't mean that you actually *are* dying. Maybe you'd need to believe that if you can take this first step of welcoming your urge without resisting it, the next step will become clearer in good time. Maybe you'd need to be open to believing that you're stronger than you know.

If none of these beliefs resonate for you, ask yourself what you'd need to truly believe to feel curious and courageous enough to allow an urge to unfold without pushing it away or even wishing it weren't there.

Why is it important to find these beliefs?

Here's why:

Because what you believe creates what you feel.

These beliefs will help you generate the emotions of curiosity and courage.

And these are two emotions that will help you to inch toward the urge instead of dash away from it.

So I want you to take some time this week to find out what you'd need to authentically believe to feel curious and courageous around your urge.

Once you've figured out your beliefs, and you're feelin' it. You're ready to say, "Urge, come on, Baby, the door is open."

And in the next episode, we're going to talk about specific questions to ask yourself when your next urge actually shows up.

You may already know the parable of the second arrow.

The Buddha, it is said, once asked a pupil whether it would be painful for a person to be struck by an arrow. Then the Buddha asked another question: If a second arrow strikes the person, is it even more painful?

Then the Buddha explained: In life, we may not always have control over the first arrow. But the second arrow is another story. *That* arrow is our reaction to the first. The second arrow is optional.

I get that the urge hurts. How it hurts for you, specifically, I may not understand. But I do know that for as long as you've been bingeing, the urge has felt intolerable in some way.

The urge is the first arrow.

Will you curl your fingers 'round the sinewy string of a bow and draw back the feathery end of a second arrow?

Or will you lay down your bow, and attend to the pain of the first strike?

You can be your own bullseye.

Or you can be your own bestie.

Uncurl your fingers, let go of the string, put down your bow.

When the urges comes with its tell-tale aching or gnawing, when it comes with its trademark pull or pain, ask these questions: How can I be willing to allow this urge to be here without flinging a second arrow, without hating the stinging of the first? How can I find the openness within me to let this unfold without making it worse or making it vanish?

In the space between the reality of the first arrow and the possibility of the second lies your freedom.

That's it for Episode 41. Thank you for listening. For a limited time, I'm teaching a free masterclass to dig 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 for free from me. Reserve your spot now at 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.