

Helping Clients Recover from a Binge (*Glenn Supervises Howie*)

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AND HOWIE JACOBSON, PH.D.**

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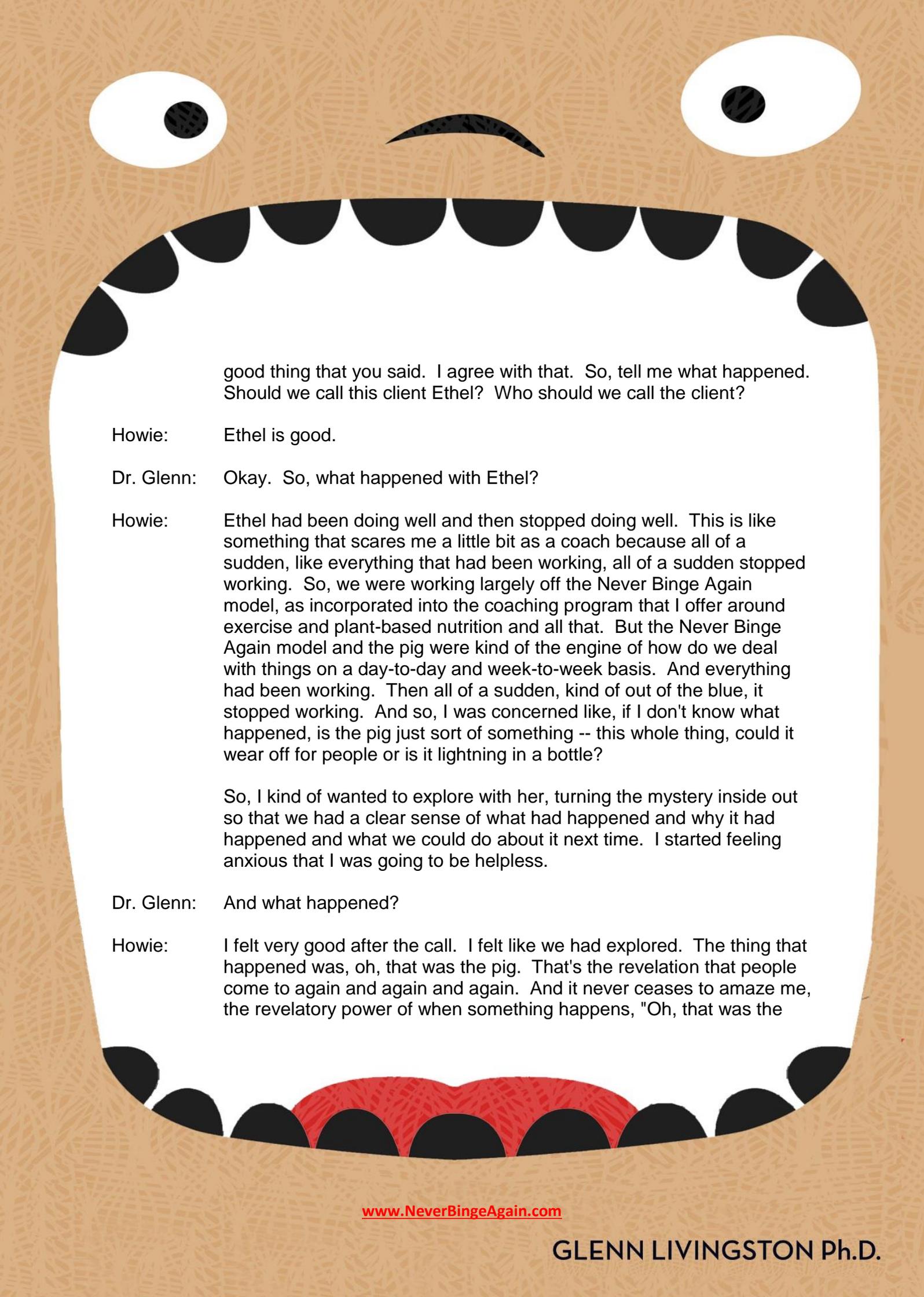
Dr. Glenn: Hey, this is the very good Glenn Livingston and I'm here with the inimitable Howard Jacobson from plantyourself.com. How are you Howie?

Howie: Inimitable? God knows I've tried.

Dr. Glenn: Howie asked me if I would listen to a 15-minute coaching call that he had with a client and he wanted to get some supervision on it. And if your client gives us permission, we will post that call, otherwise, we'll just post our talk about it. We have permission from her to do that too.

Howie: One of the side effects of asking a client permission to be supervised, they really respect you for it.

Dr. Glenn: Oh, absolutely. I've always found that clients sometimes feel frightened that they're trusting you with all the authority and responsibility and what if you're missing something you like knowing that you're part of a team. They feel like they're getting more. That's a



good thing that you said. I agree with that. So, tell me what happened. Should we call this client Ethel? Who should we call the client?

Howie: Ethel is good.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. So, what happened with Ethel?

Howie: Ethel had been doing well and then stopped doing well. This is like something that scares me a little bit as a coach because all of a sudden, like everything that had been working, all of a sudden stopped working. So, we were working largely off the Never Binge Again model, as incorporated into the coaching program that I offer around exercise and plant-based nutrition and all that. But the Never Binge Again model and the pig were kind of the engine of how do we deal with things on a day-to-day and week-to-week basis. And everything had been working. Then all of a sudden, kind of out of the blue, it stopped working. And so, I was concerned like, if I don't know what happened, is the pig just sort of something -- this whole thing, could it wear off for people or is it lightning in a bottle?

So, I kind of wanted to explore with her, turning the mystery inside out so that we had a clear sense of what had happened and why it had happened and what we could do about it next time. I started feeling anxious that I was going to be helpless.

Dr. Glenn: And what happened?

Howie: I felt very good after the call. I felt like we had explored. The thing that happened was, oh, that was the pig. That's the revelation that people come to again and again and again. And it never ceases to amaze me, the revelatory power of when something happens, "Oh, that was the



pig too." We got to that point. And yet I wasn't sure from the conversation whether I had manufactured it because I was so desperately looking for an objective answer, like, what happened, or whether we actually stumbled upon objective reality or whether I just orchestrated a call to create something in the place of that mysterious void. That's mostly what I wanted, but also, like how I introduced the question, how I led her through it, whether my questions empowered or disempowered her. So, that was all going through my mind when I asked you to review it.

Dr. Glenn: I think I can help you with the anxiety. Is it okay if I say a few things or do you want to say more?

Howie: Oh no, go ahead.

Dr. Glenn: The cause of your anxiety is actually based on a mistaken assumption. We're going to shift your paradigm just a little bit. The assumption you have is that -- it's almost like as if Never Binge Again were a gastric bypass that makes it impossible for people to make the wrong choice anymore. But that's not really what it is. Never Binge Again, it's a methodology for restoring your sense of freewill and control over what you put in your mouth. Once you got that freewill and control, there are two things that can cause you to put pig slop or things that are off your food plan into your mouth. One of them is you and the other is the pig. The pig can do it if it manages to fool you into thinking that its squeals are actually your own thoughts. And I think that with the experience that you've had with this client and maybe with some other coaching clients, was, you know, what typically happens is people learn the methodology and then the pig starts working really hard to come up with a squeal that you won't recognize or it finds a hole in your food plan or something like that.

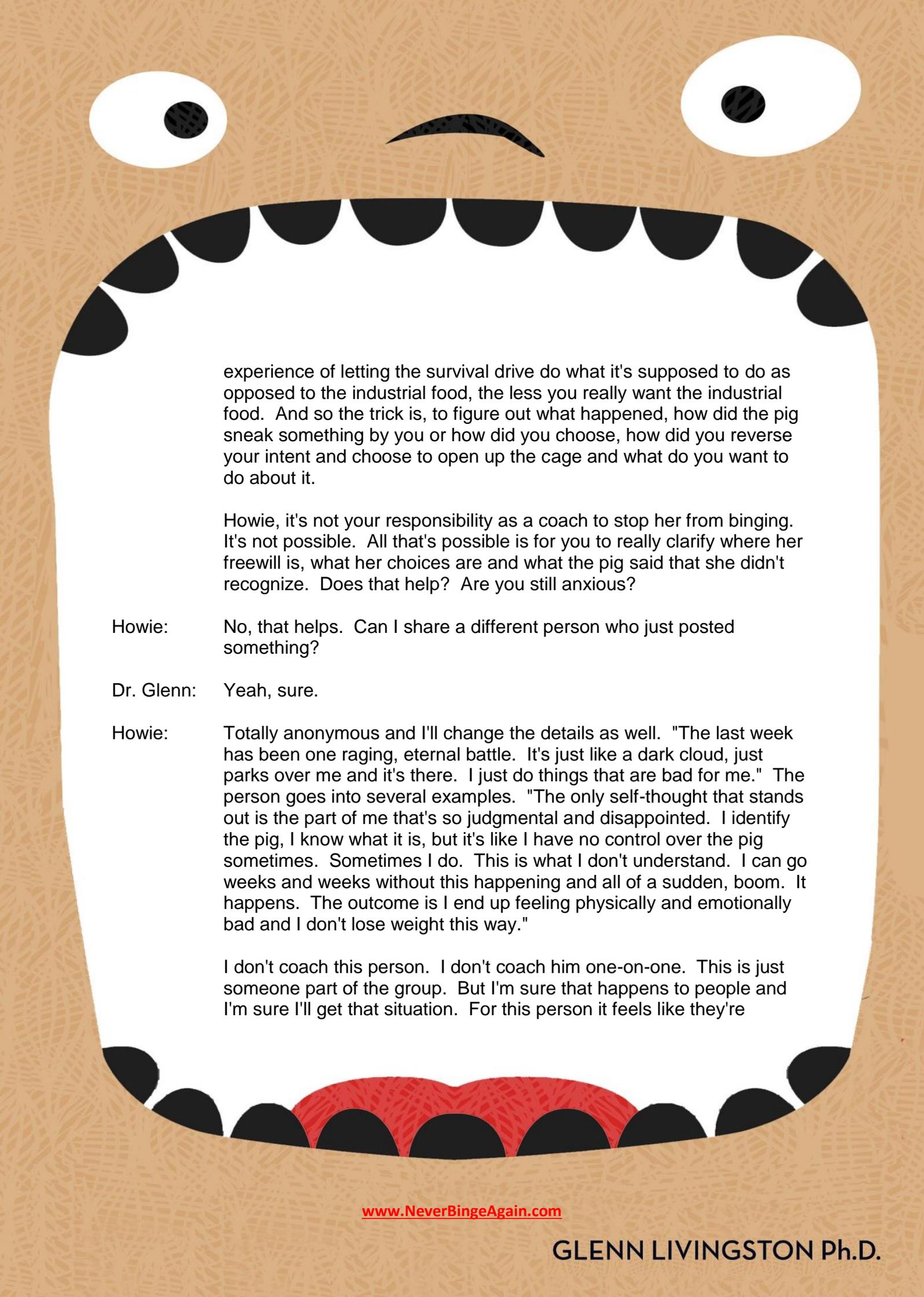


And the people that get it, they just get up again, they figure out how can they recognize the pig, what was the pig squeal that got by them and then do they need to change anything in their food plan to make sure that can't get by them again, or was it just a simple pig attack and now we're going to ignore it.

The pig can get you to put food in your mouth only if it fools you into thinking that the thoughts are yours. And so, the sense of relief and restoration of sanity that people have after the coaching session which helps them recover from a binge, is that they recognize where the pig got by them. That's the first, but that's what happened. But you can also choose to put something in your mouth that's not on your food plan. I can't take away your freewill. I can point out to you all of the illusions that prevent you from believing that you do have freewill. I can take away the sense of powerlessness. I can give you a sense of extreme expectation and hope to know that it really is possible to never binge again, but I can't take away your freewill.

In those situations, you just kind of have to help people to reorient themselves on what they want. And eventually, people start saying, you know, I reached in and I opened the pig's cage. I wanted to. And that's not nearly as frightening or overwhelming as an experience as feeling out of control because people know that if they opened up the pig's cage, that they can lock it up again. And eventually they get sick of letting the pig out. It's just not worth it because if you keep the pig in long enough, then your survival drive roots towards what it's supposed to root toward.

I know people don't believe me, but underneath a craving for chocolate is possibly a craving for broccoli. And the more that you have the



experience of letting the survival drive do what it's supposed to do as opposed to the industrial food, the less you really want the industrial food. And so the trick is, to figure out what happened, how did the pig sneak something by you or how did you choose, how did you reverse your intent and choose to open up the cage and what do you want to do about it.

Howie, it's not your responsibility as a coach to stop her from bingeing. It's not possible. All that's possible is for you to really clarify where her freewill is, what her choices are and what the pig said that she didn't recognize. Does that help? Are you still anxious?

Howie: No, that helps. Can I share a different person who just posted something?

Dr. Glenn: Yeah, sure.

Howie: Totally anonymous and I'll change the details as well. "The last week has been one raging, eternal battle. It's just like a dark cloud, just parks over me and it's there. I just do things that are bad for me." The person goes into several examples. "The only self-thought that stands out is the part of me that's so judgmental and disappointed. I identify the pig, I know what it is, but it's like I have no control over the pig sometimes. Sometimes I do. This is what I don't understand. I can go weeks and weeks without this happening and all of a sudden, boom. It happens. The outcome is I end up feeling physically and emotionally bad and I don't lose weight this way."

I don't coach this person. I don't coach him one-on-one. This is just someone part of the group. But I'm sure that happens to people and I'm sure I'll get that situation. For this person it feels like they're



walking and then lightning strikes sometimes and they have no control over it and they know everything, but the only thing that they can do is just feel bad and blame themselves.

Dr. Glenn: So, role play this with me, okay?

Howie: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: You take on the role of the person who's feeling powerless.

Howie: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: So, hey, it's Glenn from Never Binge Again. How are you?

Howie: I'm good.

Dr. Glenn: Good. What can I do for you today?

Howie: I know all about the pig. I read the book. I read the book twice. It all makes sense, so I can go weeks and follow the Never Binge Again, but then, all of a sudden, boom, I'll just do all these things that I know are not of my best interest and I'll feel terrible about it and I can't stop myself.

Dr. Glenn: What food plan are you trying to follow? What are the rules you're trying to follow?

Howie: Plant-based, no extra oil, no added sugar, whole food.

Dr. Glenn: How do you define sugar?



Howie: Added sugar to things.

Dr. Glenn: What does that mean?

Howie: I'll think of it as recreational. Food, it's just sort of dessert food, candy, cakes, donuts. I don't have a confusion about what's on the plan or what's not on the plan. When I'm doing the wrong thing, there's no part of me that's fooling myself.

Dr. Glenn: I see. What's happening at the moment that you choose to do the wrong thing?

Howie: There's this dark cloud, this constant battle going on. And I'm fighting it and then like bright sunlight, I can win, but when the cloud comes over and I have no control over this cloud, but when it comes over, I'm just not strong enough and I lose.

Dr. Glenn: The pig says that it's stronger than you and you're always going to lose and it's got you convinced.

Howie: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: It's a subtle shift in language, but do you understand the difference?

Howie: Yeah. So instead of me saying, "Here's what happens," I'm saying, "The pig has convinced me that this is what happens."

Dr. Glenn: And why is that important?

Howie: Because if it's what happens, then it's my script. It's the story that I'm going to live and there's no way out of it. But if I say, well, what I've



just told you is just the story that the pig has convinced me of that opens up to possibility that it's not true.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. What do you want to do about this?

Howie: I want to take control, so I don't end up feeling physically and emotionally bad and stop my weight loss. What it does, is it discourages me about all the good stuff that came before. It's like all of that has been wiped away. It doesn't exist anymore. It doesn't hold water.

Dr. Glenn: Your pig says that the moment that you make a mistake, everything that you've accomplished is ruined and you might as well just give up.

Howie: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: Why does your pig say that?

Howie: Because it wants me to give up.

Dr. Glenn: How come?

Howie: Because then the pig gets what it wants, it gets to binge.

Dr. Glenn: Right. Do you think that there's anything worthwhile, I mean, major accomplishment that anyone has done where they didn't make tons of mistakes along the way, fall back down the mountain a whole bunch of times?

Howie: No, probably not.



Dr. Glenn: Then it's actually a sign of strength that you keep getting up to try again, right?

Howie: Yeah. It could be a sign of stupidity if it's not the path that I should be taking.

Dr. Glenn: The pig says it is a sign of stupidity, that you're stupid and therefore you're not smart enough to figure out how to stop bingeing.

Howie: Right.

Dr. Glenn: What do you want to do about this?

Howie: I want to get control over it, but I don't want to be disappointed again. I'm almost scared to try again.

Dr. Glenn: The pig says that you're going to feel so demoralized if you make another mistake that you might as well not even try.

Howie: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: And the pig wants you to make a plan to forget. The pig is planning for you to screw up, but the essence of a vow, of an attempt is a plan to remember, right?

Howie: Right.

Dr. Glenn: You didn't necessary make a solid vow last time. You made a kind of wishy-washy piggy vow, where the pig was the whole time telling you that you were going to forget.



Howie: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: What do you want to do about this?

Howie: I want to make the vow to remember and stick to it.

Dr. Glenn: Well, why can't you do that?

Howie: I don't know.

Dr. Glenn: What if you did know?

Howie: I need a way to deal with that dark cloud.

Dr. Glenn: Why can't you have a dark cloud over your head and not binge?

Howie: Yeah, that's what I don't know.

Dr. Glenn: Do you have to binge if you have a dark cloud over your head? Could you just have a bad day?

Howie: Yeah, that's what I want. I want to not have to binge.

Dr. Glenn: Are you going to do that or not? Next time you have a bad day, you're going to binge?

Howie: Well, history is saying yes.

Dr. Glenn: So, you're planning to then?

Howie: I'll see.



Dr. Glenn: Behind every fear is a wish. Behind the fear that you're going to binge is the pig's plan to binge.

Howie: I see.

Dr. Glenn: I'm separating this person from their pig. Every question is driving them further and further apart. It makes them uncomfortable, but it's really the pig's feelings that are uncomfortable.

Howie: Yeah, I see.

Dr. Glenn: And I just keep on driving them apart until they don't have any more excuses and they say, "Well, it just feels like I'm going to." I say, "Well, that's because you have a pig inside. It's always going to want to binge. You're always going to feel that but you don't ever have to do it again."

Howie: I see.

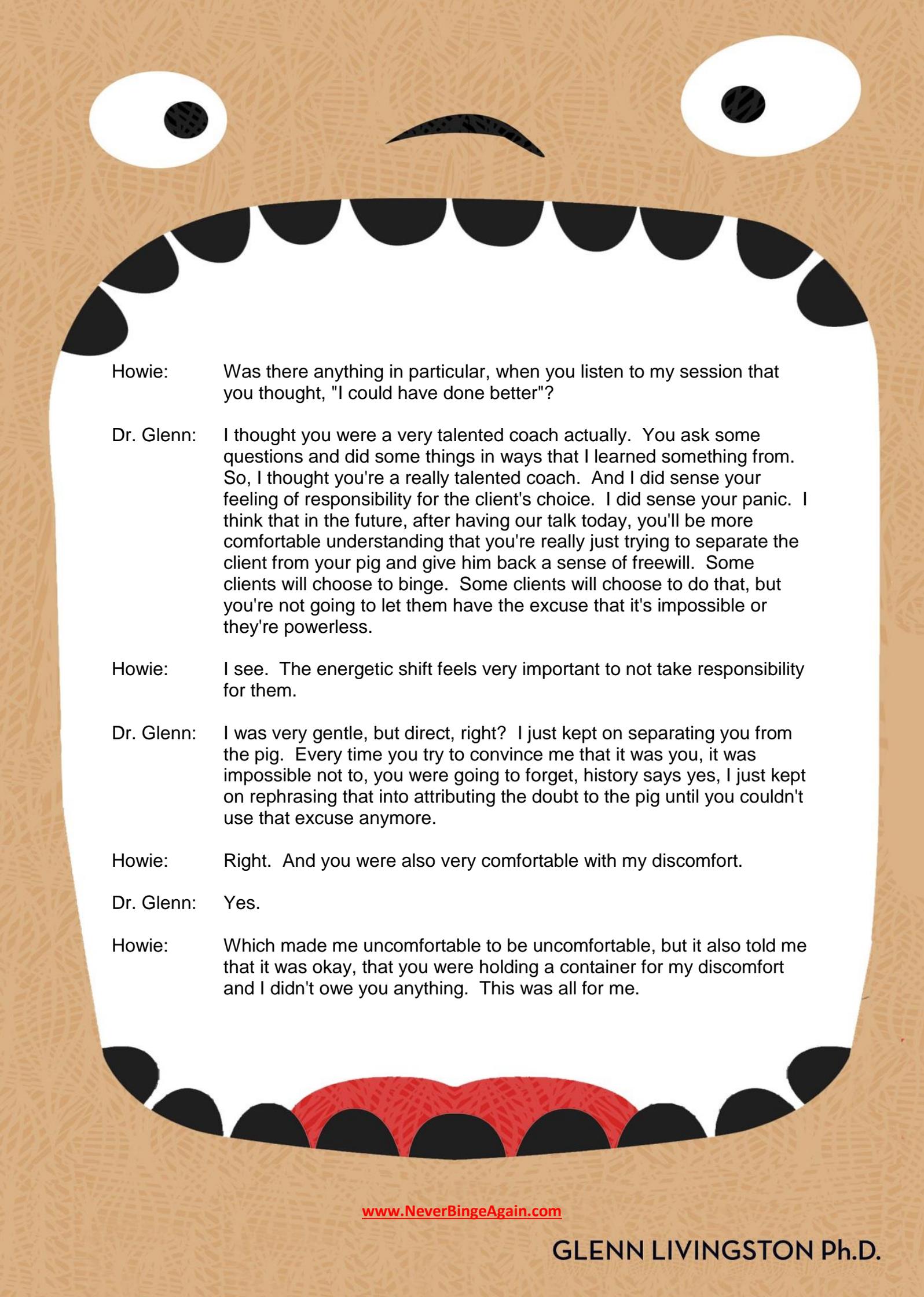
Dr. Glenn: Does that make sense?

Howie: Yeah, yeah. Thank you.

Dr. Glenn: And Howie, people make mistakes. You help them with this and they get back up.

Howie: Right. Okay, I feel better.

Dr. Glenn: Okay.



Howie: Was there anything in particular, when you listen to my session that you thought, "I could have done better"?

Dr. Glenn: I thought you were a very talented coach actually. You ask some questions and did some things in ways that I learned something from. So, I thought you're a really talented coach. And I did sense your feeling of responsibility for the client's choice. I did sense your panic. I think that in the future, after having our talk today, you'll be more comfortable understanding that you're really just trying to separate the client from your pig and give him back a sense of freewill. Some clients will choose to binge. Some clients will choose to do that, but you're not going to let them have the excuse that it's impossible or they're powerless.

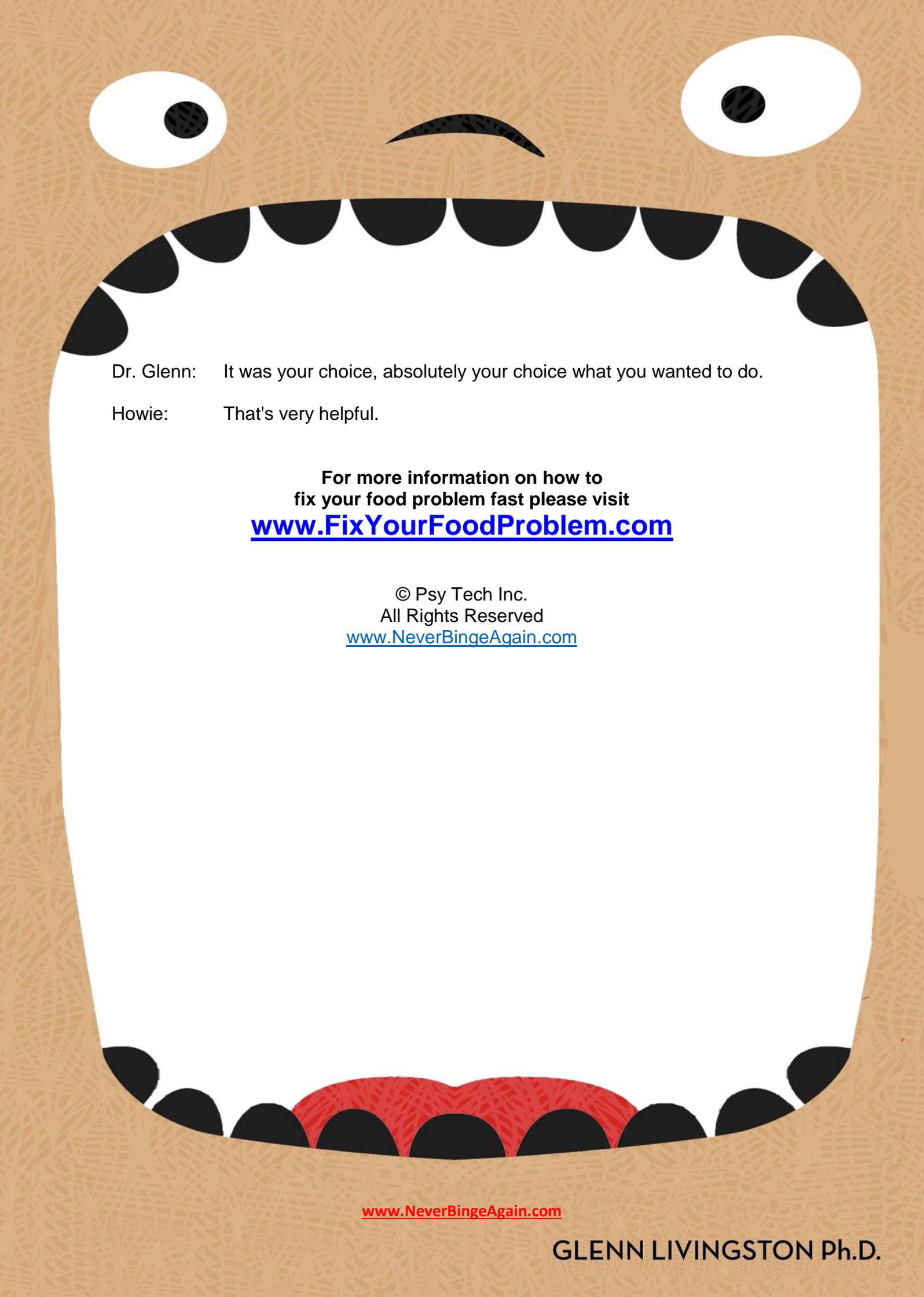
Howie: I see. The energetic shift feels very important to not take responsibility for them.

Dr. Glenn: I was very gentle, but direct, right? I just kept on separating you from the pig. Every time you try to convince me that it was you, it was impossible not to, you were going to forget, history says yes, I just kept on rephrasing that into attributing the doubt to the pig until you couldn't use that excuse anymore.

Howie: Right. And you were also very comfortable with my discomfort.

Dr. Glenn: Yes.

Howie: Which made me uncomfortable to be uncomfortable, but it also told me that it was okay, that you were holding a container for my discomfort and I didn't owe you anything. This was all for me.



Dr. Glenn: It was your choice, absolutely your choice what you wanted to do.

Howie: That's very helpful.

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