

**Glenn Livingston, Ph.D.
Recruiting Mental Toughness
To Stop Overeating
With Yoav**

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Dr. Glenn: It is the very good Dr. Glenn Livingston with Never Binge Again, and who am I with?

Yoav: You are with Sergeant Master Yoav Ezer, the CEO of Never Binge Again and your good buddy for 15 freaking years now.

Dr. Glenn: You are.

Yoav: It's crazy.

Dr. Glenn: I know, back in the days when we both had hair and teeth.

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GLENN LIVINGSTON Ph.D.



Yoav: I never had hair. I was born bald. But remember we had this talk yesterday and you said you once upon a time charged a thousand bucks an hour for consultations and I told you yes. I bought that. Do you remember that?

Dr. Glenn: Yes, and I had forgotten you did.

Yoav: I did. I paid a thousand bucks, and you were kind enough to split it in two. You gave me two half hours.

Dr. Glenn: But it doubled your business, right? It was worth it.

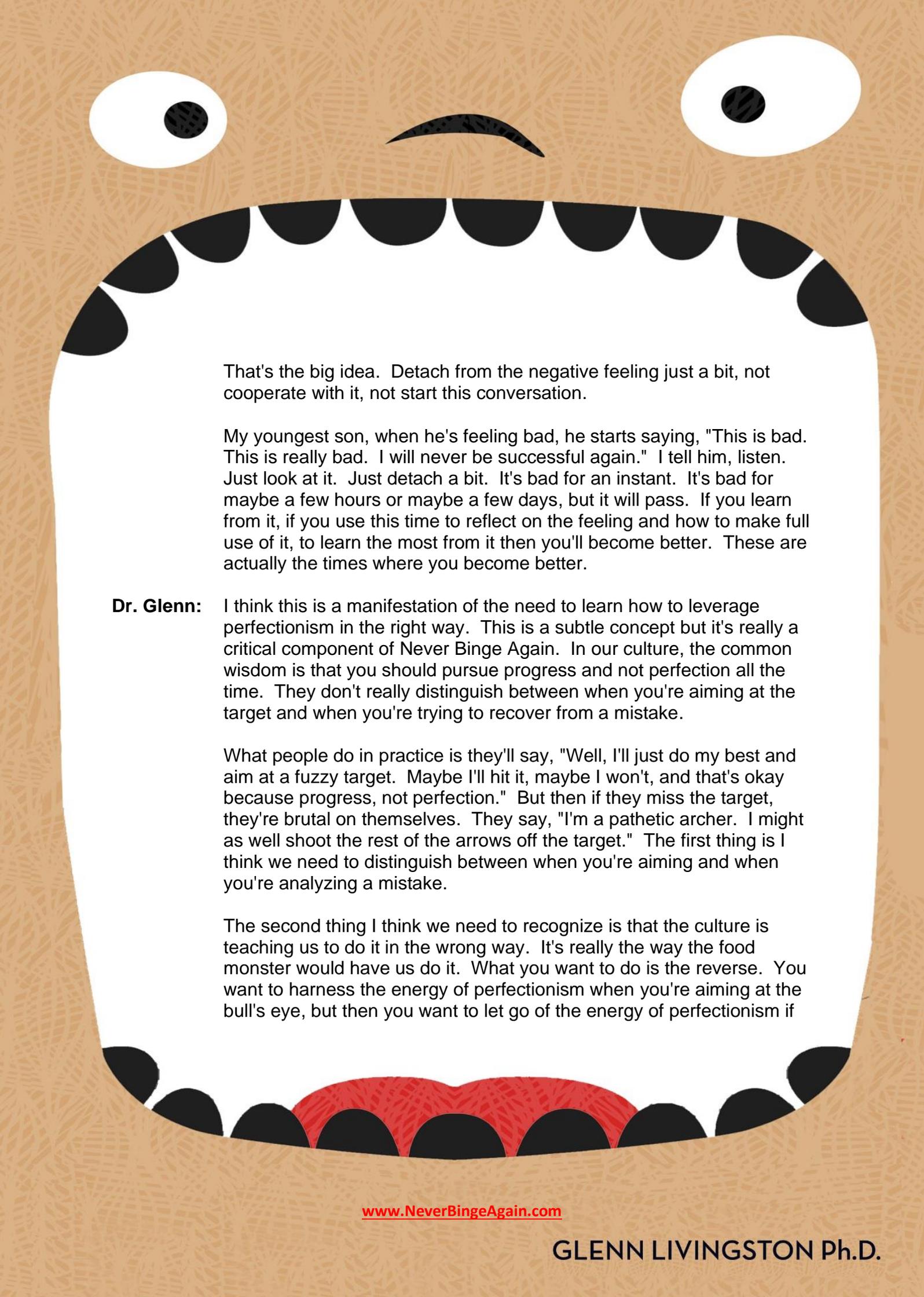
Yoav: It did. It was.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. Anyway, you had something you wanted to talk about.

Yoav: Sure. It's a short topic but I think it's important, and the topic is enjoying hard times. I think that's the basis for mental toughness. In the beginning when we started working, I thought mental toughness was about being tough and just going through hard times, but I'm thinking more that you need to reframe them, if that makes sense.

Dr. Glenn: Tell me.

Yoav: Let's say you did really well for a couple of months and then you binged. You're now 12 hours after the binge and you're suffering. Everything's bad. The world looks bleak. Everything's dark. Now, you have two options. One option is to go with the negative thoughts and go further and further down the hole of black despair. The other one is to decide to make the best of it and learn from the mistake, detach.



That's the big idea. Detach from the negative feeling just a bit, not cooperate with it, not start this conversation.

My youngest son, when he's feeling bad, he starts saying, "This is bad. This is really bad. I will never be successful again." I tell him, listen. Just look at it. Just detach a bit. It's bad for an instant. It's bad for maybe a few hours or maybe a few days, but it will pass. If you learn from it, if you use this time to reflect on the feeling and how to make full use of it, to learn the most from it then you'll become better. These are actually the times where you become better.

Dr. Glenn: I think this is a manifestation of the need to learn how to leverage perfectionism in the right way. This is a subtle concept but it's really a critical component of Never Binge Again. In our culture, the common wisdom is that you should pursue progress and not perfection all the time. They don't really distinguish between when you're aiming at the target and when you're trying to recover from a mistake.

What people do in practice is they'll say, "Well, I'll just do my best and aim at a fuzzy target. Maybe I'll hit it, maybe I won't, and that's okay because progress, not perfection." But then if they miss the target, they're brutal on themselves. They say, "I'm a pathetic archer. I might as well shoot the rest of the arrows off the target." The first thing is I think we need to distinguish between when you're aiming and when you're analyzing a mistake.

The second thing I think we need to recognize is that the culture is teaching us to do it in the wrong way. It's really the way the food monster would have us do it. What you want to do is the reverse. You want to harness the energy of perfectionism when you're aiming at the bull's eye, but then you want to let go of the energy of perfectionism if



you made a mistake. If you think about what an Olympic archer does when they miss the bull's eye, they pay careful attention to it. They feel the pain but then they say, well, by how much and in what direction? They know that because they've got a really clearly defined bull's eye. They make the necessary adjustments and ask themselves what they can learn from it. They don't give up. They don't shoot the rest of the arrows up in the air. They don't throw it down and have a temper tantrum. They don't say, "Well, I'm not perfect; therefore, I'm nothing." They let go of the energy of perfectionism so they can analyze the mistake, but then they'll harness the energy of perfectionism again when they're shooting at the target.

Most people, when we first introduce them to Never Binge Again, they understand this in theory and they harness the energy of perfectionism as they're aiming at the target. Majority of people we work with are successful with that usually for a significant period of time. But then they make their first mistake and they forget about how to handle the other half like how do you analyze when you didn't hit the bull's eye? What do you do with that? It becomes overwhelming to them, and the pig's emphasis on the fact that if you're not perfect, you must be nothing, it takes over. It tells them they're pathetic and they get very involved with that negative voice.

The goal is to commit with perfection and forgive yourself with dignity. Most people don't know what that really means until they make their first mistake. Does that make sense?

Yoav:

It does, but I think that enjoying the hard times, separating them and being able to live through them is like the foundational skill to be able to do that.



Let me give you an example. Let's say you make a mistake. We tell them forgive yourself with dignity, try to learn from the mistake, and then aim with perfection again. But the reality is once you make a mistake, you won't feel good about it because you've had very big expectations. You also had a period of success where you thought you were very, very successful, might even be successful forever, and then you make a mistake. You're going to feel disheartened. You're going to feel sad.

It's your ability to slightly disengage from that feeling and look at it as something that happens to you but it's not you that will allow you to go through it and learn. Forgive yourself and learn because if you're one with that feeling, like you said, and you're very involved with the feeling then you won't be able to forgive yourself. Does that make sense?

Dr. Glenn: It does make sense. It's difficult to let go of that feeling.

Yoav: Let's say you're feeling tired. You're not hungry but you're really exhausted. A lot of people, when they're exhausted, they want to eat to get energy. It's like a habit. We want to offset the exhaustion with food. But if you are willing to accept being exhausted knowing that you will feel better maybe even in half an hour, maybe even in 10 minutes that you won't feel exhausted, you'll be able to go through it.

The ability not to respond to the emotion, to just notice it and go through it, it's actually very powerful. It's like when our clients finally extinguish their bingeing habits and they're able to feel sad, lonely, anxious and whatever negative emotion they feel without getting the urge, without bingeing. They're simultaneously feeling not good, they're experiencing a negative emotion, and they're in control. That's a great



feeling even though you're feeling bad. At that point where you're feeling the negative emotion but still in control, that's mental toughness.

Dr. Glenn: I see what you mean and that's a muscle we have to develop also.

Yoav: Also. The way, I think, to approach it is if you look at the negative emotion. What I do is I label it. I say to myself I'm sad. I'm angry. I can feel the rush of anger going to my head. I can feel myself starting to tremble, all the side effects of really being angry, but I don't give into it. I don't call you up and start shouting. I say I'm angry, let it pass, get to the other side then do the work.

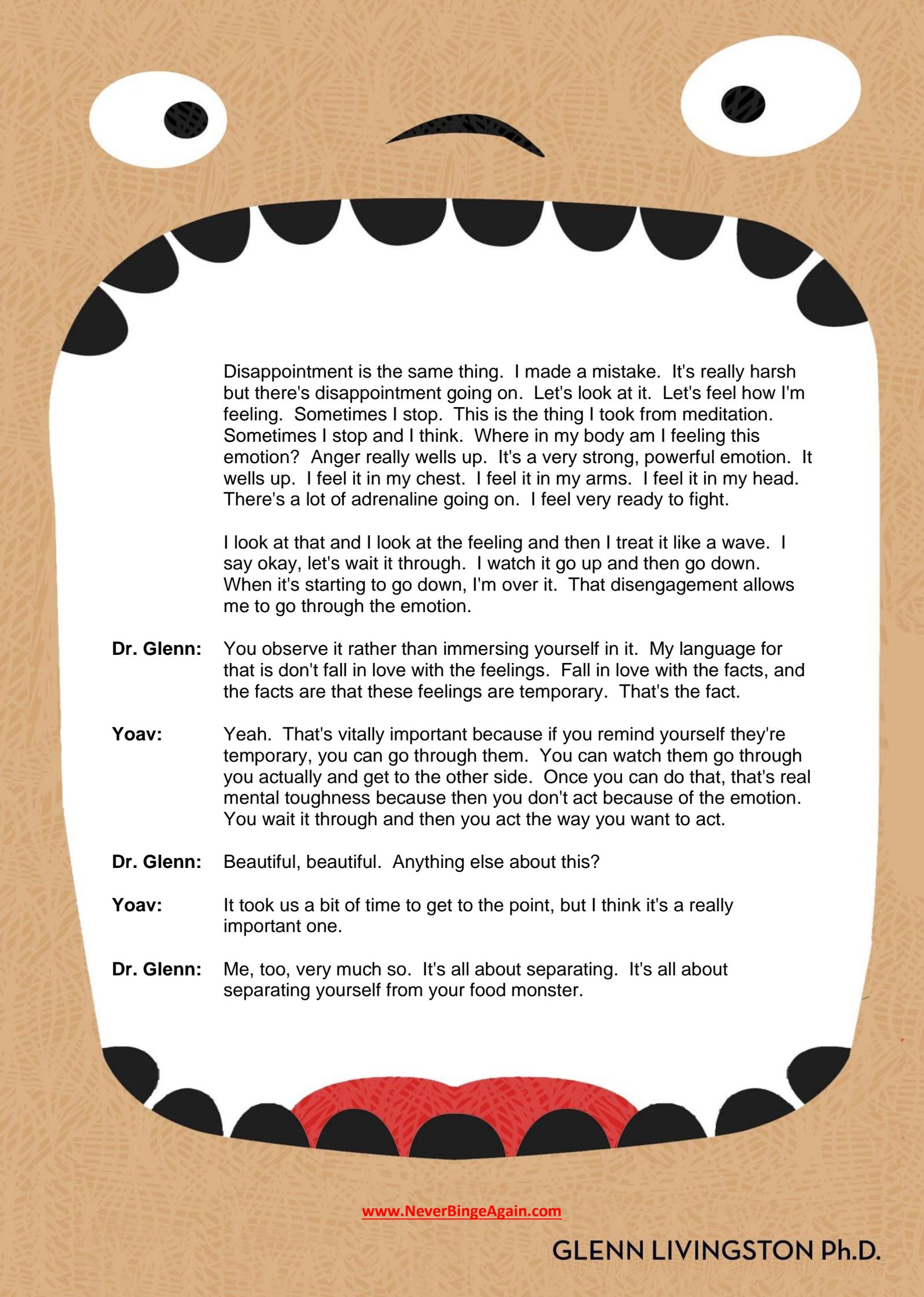
That ability, if you label it and then you live with the emotion until the wave passes, that allows you to forgive yourself because you can then live with the shame or live with the disappointment of not doing what you wanted to do. Get over the wave of disappointment, get to the other side, accept that you're human, learn and move on.

Dr. Glenn: Just say that one more time. What is that you recruit inside yourself to get through that time?

Yoav: I label the emotion.

Dr. Glenn: Okay.

Yoav: I label it. What you don't want to do is you don't want to become intertwined with it. Feel like you're it. You want to say instead of "I am sad," you want to say, "This is sadness. I'm feeling sadness." I'm not sad. There's a sad feeling going on. Then you can look at it and it's like a wave.



Disappointment is the same thing. I made a mistake. It's really harsh but there's disappointment going on. Let's look at it. Let's feel how I'm feeling. Sometimes I stop. This is the thing I took from meditation. Sometimes I stop and I think. Where in my body am I feeling this emotion? Anger really wells up. It's a very strong, powerful emotion. It wells up. I feel it in my chest. I feel it in my arms. I feel it in my head. There's a lot of adrenaline going on. I feel very ready to fight.

I look at that and I look at the feeling and then I treat it like a wave. I say okay, let's wait it through. I watch it go up and then go down. When it's starting to go down, I'm over it. That disengagement allows me to go through the emotion.

Dr. Glenn: You observe it rather than immersing yourself in it. My language for that is don't fall in love with the feelings. Fall in love with the facts, and the facts are that these feelings are temporary. That's the fact.

Yoav: Yeah. That's vitally important because if you remind yourself they're temporary, you can go through them. You can watch them go through you actually and get to the other side. Once you can do that, that's real mental toughness because then you don't act because of the emotion. You wait it through and then you act the way you want to act.

Dr. Glenn: Beautiful, beautiful. Anything else about this?

Yoav: It took us a bit of time to get to the point, but I think it's a really important one.

Dr. Glenn: Me, too, very much so. It's all about separating. It's all about separating yourself from your food monster.



Yoav: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Thanks for your time and attention. If you'd like to find out more about how to fix your food problem fast using our new coaching format that includes daily email accountability, a 45-day mastery challenge and live support groups four times per week, all completely optional, of course, you don't have to come four times a week, they're just there if you need it, please visit FixYourFoodProblem.com. That's FixYourFoodProblem.com. If you'd like to walk yourself through the coaching process and do it yourself, please visit NeverBingeAgainWorkbook.com. NeverBingeAgainWorkbook.com. For live coaching, daily email accountability, four times a week group support and a 45-day mastery challenge, please visit FixYourFoodProblem.com, or to do it yourself, please visit NeverBingeAgainWorkbook.com. NeverBingeAgainWorkbook.com. Thanks.

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