

Glenn Livingston, Ph.D. and Vanessa, Sugar Emotions

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Dr. Glenn: Hey, this is the very good Dr. Glenn Livingston, and I'm here with a very kind woman named Vanessa, who agreed to let me record the call so that you all can benefit from her struggles and observations and insights and progress. Vanessa, how are you today?

Vanessa: I'm fine, thank you. How are you?

Dr. Glenn: I'm very good.

Vanessa: Good.

Dr. Glenn: I was looking forward to the call. So you responded to a note that I put on the forum and you've said that you might like to talk about shame and guilt and how it interferes with your eating. Can you tell me a little bit more about that? What do you mean?

Vanessa: Well, it seems like I get into this cycle where I will binge and then I feel so shameful and I see my body and I feel shameful. And then I just continue to binge. It's like a cycle. I'm starting to break it with your philosophy with the pig now and that's been very, very helpful. That's kind of what's been going on.



Dr. Glenn: Got it. So it's like a downward snowball. You feel shame and then it seems like binging is going to make you feel better, and then you feel worse and then it seems like binging is going to make you feel better?

Vanessa: Exactly. It's been going on for years like this. You know, I've gone through different diets and gone up and down and up and down, but I always come back to the binging and the shame.

Dr. Glenn: When you read *Never Binge Again*, did it occur to you that part of the purpose of the shame was to make the binging possible, that the pig wanted you to be yelling at yourself to feel too weak to be able to resist the binging? Did that ever occur to you?

Vanessa: Yes, I did. Yes, it did. But maybe angry because the pig has so much control, and that's why I'm binging. And then I'm trying to get over my anger with the pig and put him in his right place.

Dr. Glenn: Well, that's interesting. One of the things that I tell people is that, although I like to consider myself a loving person, this isn't really a loving philosophy, and we get over our binging by getting angry at the pig.

Vanessa: Oh, okay.

Dr. Glenn: We don't get over the binging by accepting and loving it. We get over it by getting fed up with it and really p.o.'d at how it's been controlling us. Does that make sense?

Vanessa: That makes sense, and it makes sense that I've been trying to love the pig. Even though I feel the anger, I'm like, "No. I can't be angry. I'm



not an angry person. I need to love this pig and get him in his place." So that's a very interesting point.

Dr. Glenn: Well, by definition, the pig represents all of your destructive thoughts about food, which have caused you so much pain and shame over the years. And so what is there to love about all those destructive thoughts?

Vanessa: Well, that's very true. There's nothing to love about that.

Dr. Glenn: And the pig is partners with industry, the big food that creates all of these concentrated sources of fat and sugar and oil and starch and sodium and cytotoxins and put it all in the smallest space possible. And then they figure out how to wrap it up in a package that makes it look healthy and appealing. And they spend billions of dollars to advertise it to us so it seems irresistible. So there's nothing to love about that either.

Vanessa: No.

Dr. Glenn: That's something to get fed up with.

Vanessa: Yeah, yeah, that's true.

Dr. Glenn: Has there been anything in your life that you got good and fed up with?

Vanessa: Not really. I can't think of everything that I got good and fed up with. No, not too much really. I have an easy-going personality and just kind of accept things for what they are. Like I said, I don't want the anger so I don't let myself get too angry. I really can't look back and say



anything I've been really fed up with other than this eating struggle I have gone through.

Dr. Glenn: Well, maybe the pig will be the first one.

Vanessa: Yeah. I have to allow myself to feel the anger towards the pig and let it out.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. Put the pig in its place.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Do you have a food plan that you're trying to follow?

Vanessa: Yes. I have a very good food plan that I'm finding that I keep adding things to it to tweak it and to make it mine. I've just been working on giving up sugar, refined sugar. And my next goal will be to give up the white flour but I'm not quite there yet. I'm still working on the sugar.

Dr. Glenn: Is it really clear to you what refined sugar is and what refined sugar isn't?

Vanessa: Yes, yeah. I understand. I've been doing a lot of research with that.

Dr. Glenn: When you say that you're binging, it's not because the pig is fooling you and saying, "Oh, this is really okay to eat," but it's more because the pig wants it and you say, "Okay. What the hell?"

Vanessa: Yeah. The pig has been very strong lately and I have given up and said that. Well, I guess because I'm tired to stand up to the pig but it's just been really very loud and very annoying so much during the day.



Whereas, before the binging, it was like you give it a little bit binge and it's happy.

Dr. Glenn: It doesn't want to be caged. It knows what you're doing.

Vanessa: That's true.

Dr. Glenn: It doesn't want you to put it away. It's miserable in its cage, but it's too bad for the pig.

Vanessa: Right.

Dr. Glenn: It had its fun. It had its years. It had its chance to prove itself worthy and all it wants you to do is binge. So, too bad for the pig.

Vanessa: Exactly.

Dr. Glenn: What would it mean to you to give up refined sugar to stay away from that? If you could do that for a whole year, what would be different in your life?

Vanessa: Well, I know I would feel so much better physically. I have more energy. I'd be able to lose weight. It's just the whole concept of feeling better that's getting me going. I really want to feel better and be healthy, and there would be less health concerns in my life.

Dr. Glenn: Can we talk about that more specifically so you'd feel better physically? What would be better?

Vanessa: Well, I'd be able to keep up with the day's tasks, not have to do something and sit down, and then get up and do something again and



then sit down because I'm so tired from sugar, where I'd be able to just keep going and have my energy right there with me. To me, that means a lot.

Dr. Glenn: You don't have to keep sitting down to rest, mm-hmm.

Vanessa: Right, yeah. I have to keep taking breaks and I don't really like that. I want to be involved in life and keep going.

Dr. Glenn: And have a lot more energy to be more involved in life, mm-hmm.

Vanessa: That's where the binges keep me out of life, and the sugar keeps me out of life, that I'd finally be able to partake life as I want to. That would mean so much to me.

Dr. Glenn: Vanessa, tell me more about that. What would you partake in that you're not partaking in now?

Vanessa: My days are filled with just kind of staying home because I just don't have energy to go out and do things. My husband is a pastor and I'd be able to be more involved with what he's doing as far as visiting people, which I enjoy just doing things for the church, which I really enjoy like, Sunday school, teaching Sunday school and that kind of thing, and just keeping up with the daily fines of cleaning the house.

Dr. Glenn: So you get to go visit people in the ministry and you get to keep Sunday school, keep up with things in the house. What else would you do?

Vanessa: Well, I actually like to volunteer. So that's been on my mind, but I just haven't felt the energy to do that yet. I want to volunteer at the local



hospital with holding babies and just rocking them and loving them, that kind of thing. Like I said, I have to get my energy up. So that would be a really good reward.

Dr. Glenn: You said your health would be better. What would be better in your health?

Vanessa: Well, I'm overweight, so that would be better to lose the weight and just some health concerns that go with that, like diabetes and high cholesterol. That kind of thing needs to be improved.

Dr. Glenn: So you wouldn't be worried about your diabetes or your high cholesterol?

Vanessa: Right. I wouldn't have to be worried because I'd be following the food plan that I want that would enable it to be taken care of with the no sugar and that kind of thing.

Dr. Glenn: What else would be different in a year?

Vanessa: Well, I do take a yearly trip up to see my granddaughters, and that would be needing in a lot more energy as I grow older because they're six and eight now. It would be different just to spend time with them and be able to do things. Instead of just sitting there and having them bring things to me, I could just sit down and color with them or do whatever they wanted to do. So that would be different in a year or two and just my little outlook on life would be different, I believe.

Dr. Glenn: How old are your granddaughters?

Vanessa: They're six and eight.



Dr. Glenn: That's a cute age.

Vanessa: Yeah, it is, and very energetic and I want to keep up with them.

Dr. Glenn: Make some memories with them, right?

Vanessa: Yeah, that's it, the memories.

Dr. Glenn: What else? What about your clothes, your finances, or your friendships?

Vanessa: Oh, boy, that's a big one, the finances, because the money I'm using on bingeing would certainly go to better use in the household finances. It costs a lot of money to binge, and I do feel guilty about that. And then I'd be able to wear more stylish clothes, which I would like to do instead of bumpy grandma kind of clothes.

Dr. Glenn: How much does it cost to binge?

Vanessa: Well, on a day, I could spend almost \$20 bingeing, \$20 of food. And so if you add that up like three or four times a week, that's quite a bit of money.

Dr. Glenn: Let's just do that for a second. Say three times a week, so it would be \$60 a week. Spend \$3,000 a year, right?

Vanessa: Right. Oh goodness, yes. Boy, that's amazing to think about that.

Dr. Glenn: Three thousand dollars in those bags and boxes and containers that goes to big food. What kind of more stylish clothes would you wear?



Vanessa: I'd probably wear more dresses. I really enjoy being a woman wearing dresses. I don't wear them now because I think my body is just too ugly and I wear slacks a lot and just a shirt and I want to just be more stylish.

Dr. Glenn: Is there a nice dress sitting in your closet that you're waiting to wear?

Vanessa: Yes, yes, there is. I got it in Germany about a year ago and I'm just looking forward to getting into that.

Dr. Glenn: What color is it?

Vanessa: It's blue, a light blue flowers on it. It's really pretty and stylish, sleeveless, which would be really nice to do and not have sleeves.

Dr. Glenn: Blue, flowerily, sleeveless German dress.

Vanessa: Yeah, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Anything else about your relationships with your husband or your kids or grandkids that would be different?

Vanessa: Yeah. I know sometimes when I have finished my binge, I get really irritated at my husband for no reason at all, and I'll yell at him. I just don't really want to listen to what he has to say and just think that I'm the right one here. And I know it's the sugar that's producing all these feelings and thoughts. I know more than he does instead of just making it more of a partnership that we needed to discuss something together.



Dr. Glenn: Does he get back at you for that?

Vanessa: No. He's very kind. He'll walk away sometimes, which he should do. He does, and he's very kind.

Dr. Glenn: That's sweet. So you have more of a partnership. What else would be different?

Vanessa: Another thing I could do, I just thought that this was probably silly, but I could walk the dog. Right now, I can't go out and walk because I just don't have the energy. But just loving my animals would be a big change too.

Dr. Glenn: You have one dog?

Vanessa: One dog, yes, and three cats.

Dr. Glenn: Oh, they'd be happy.

Vanessa: Yeah, they'd be happy because sometimes I just don't want to be in the same room with them and that's not very nice because of the sugar. The sugar really affects so much. I'm realizing this as I'm speaking with you.

Dr. Glenn: It takes away your whole life in some ways, doesn't it?

Vanessa: It does. It really does. I could be a completely different person in a year and like myself more, because I really don't like who I am now. I don't like myself and don't like what I'm doing.

Dr. Glenn: Let's talk to your pig for a little bit, if that's okay.



Vanessa: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: Why does your pig say that you can't give up sugar, won't give up sugar, shouldn't give up sugar?

Vanessa: Because I do like the taste of it. I like the taste of sugar. I enjoy eating sweet things and the pig wants them. The pig doesn't see that they really are a necessary thing in life, but take things that the sugar has to be there.

Dr. Glenn: What else?

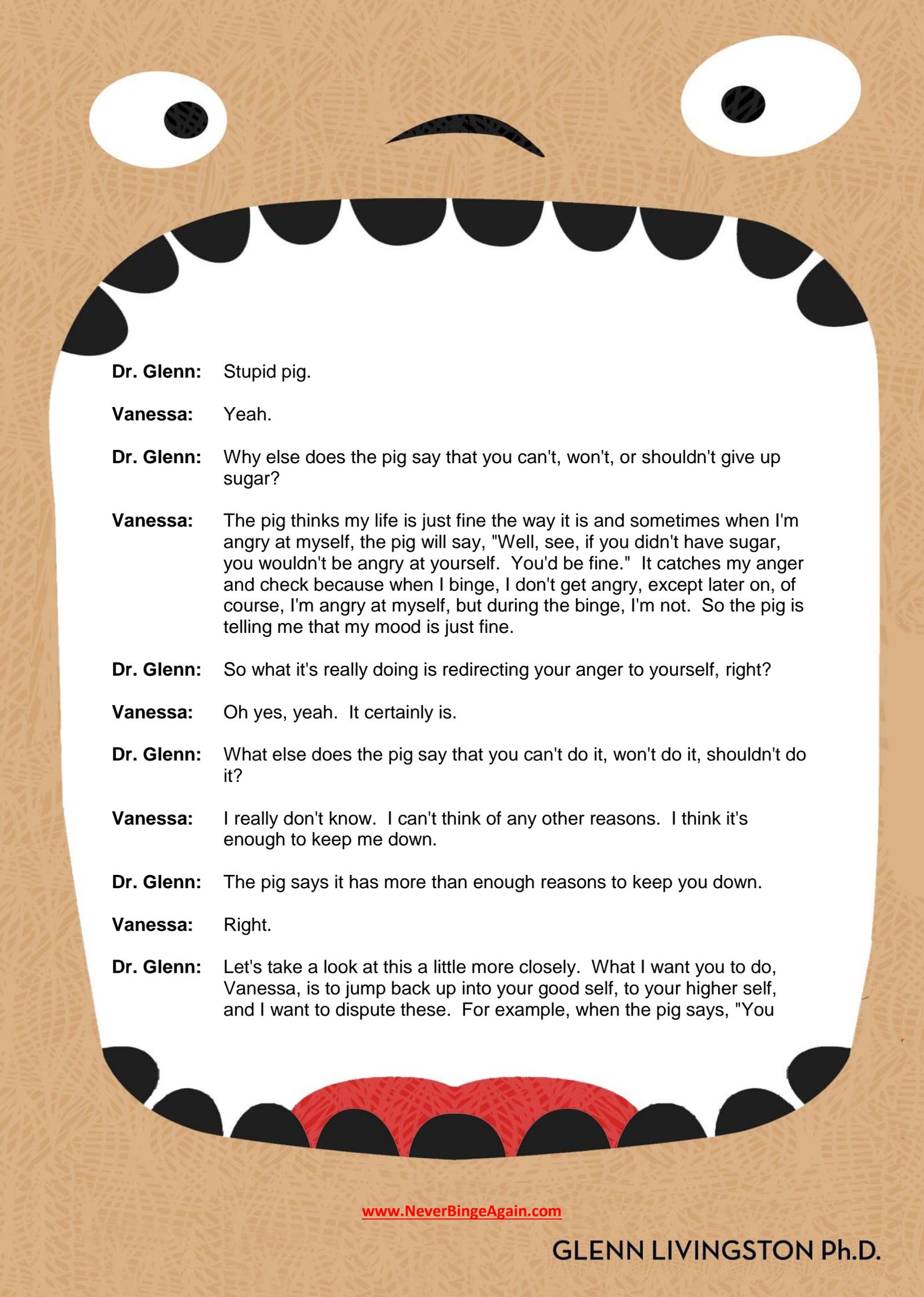
Vanessa: You know, the pig I think also wants to keep me in this place where he's the dominant one and keep me down so that he can just have his way.

Dr. Glenn: That's really annoying, isn't it?

Vanessa: It is. It is very annoying. I remember when I was speaking with the counselor with the Never Binge Again program. I had told her I was going to go off with sugar and she said, "Well, what is your pig saying?" And the pig was just astonished. The pig was just like standing there unconscious, couldn't believe it and it couldn't say anything. And I thought that was a pretty good picture to have to give up sugar.

Dr. Glenn: Good. So the pig is going to be upset because it wants to keep you in your place.

Vanessa: Yeah, yeah, it wants to.



Dr. Glenn: Stupid pig.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Why else does the pig say that you can't, won't, or shouldn't give up sugar?

Vanessa: The pig thinks my life is just fine the way it is and sometimes when I'm angry at myself, the pig will say, "Well, see, if you didn't have sugar, you wouldn't be angry at yourself. You'd be fine." It catches my anger and check because when I binge, I don't get angry, except later on, of course, I'm angry at myself, but during the binge, I'm not. So the pig is telling me that my mood is just fine.

Dr. Glenn: So what it's really doing is redirecting your anger to yourself, right?

Vanessa: Oh yes, yeah. It certainly is.

Dr. Glenn: What else does the pig say that you can't do it, won't do it, shouldn't do it?

Vanessa: I really don't know. I can't think of any other reasons. I think it's enough to keep me down.

Dr. Glenn: The pig says it has more than enough reasons to keep you down.

Vanessa: Right.

Dr. Glenn: Let's take a look at this a little more closely. What I want you to do, Vanessa, is to jump back up into your good self, to your higher self, and I want to dispute these. For example, when the pig says, "You



really like the text, you really enjoy it; therefore, you shouldn't give up sugar." What's a better answer for that?

Vanessa: The answer would be, sugar is not a helpful thing for me to have and I want to take care of myself and I don't deserve to have the sugar ruin my life. I want to live life and the sugar is keeping me from it so I don't need it anymore.

Dr. Glenn: Right, because you want to make memories with the grandkids and you want to be able to partake in life and go do the ministry and keep Sunday school and do volunteer work and you want to stop spending \$3,000 a year. You want to live in that blue flowery sleeveless German dress. You want to do all that stuff, right?

Vanessa: Right, right. Without sugar, there's a lot to look forward to, without the pig telling me to eat the sugar. So they have to stay caged.

Dr. Glenn: Your dog is going to be a lot of happier if you stop eating sugar, right, go for walks with him?

Vanessa: Yeah. Yeah, he likes to walk, of course.

Dr. Glenn: What's his name?

Vanessa: Jack.

Dr. Glenn: Jack. That's such a good name for a dog.

Vanessa: Yeah, I know. He's a Welsh Corgi.

Dr. Glenn: Oh my goodness. How old is he?



Vanessa: He's about 10. He's getting up there.

Dr. Glenn: I can picture him. Jack, the dog. He's got a couple of years. You can make his end of life really nice.

Vanessa: Yes, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: When the pig says, "You have to feed me sugar so I can keep you in your place," what's a better answer for that?

Vanessa: I don't have to feed you sugar and I don't want to stay in this place. I have a new place to go to, which is far better than with sugar; a new life to live.

Dr. Glenn: About time that the pig realized who the boss was, right?

Vanessa: Exactly, yes.

Dr. Glenn: What about when the pig says that sugar is the only way to keep your anger in check?

Vanessa: I will have to examine because I know intellectually, that's not true, that I have the right to be angry, I have the right to take care of my anger in good ways like, with journaling and not lashing out at my husband. There are better ways to -- it's okay to be angry. I have got to figure that one out yet.

Dr. Glenn: You can journal. You could exercise. You could talk it through with a friend. A lot of things you could do.



Vanessa: Yeah. So anger is part of our emotional being and I need to realize that and just not be angry at myself but be angry at the pig or whatever the situation is and talk it out like you said.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. The pig says it has more than enough reasons to keep you down forever. Is that true?

Vanessa: No, it may have other reasons, but that doesn't mean I have to listen to him.

Dr. Glenn: No matter what it says, right?

Vanessa: Right. Yeah. He can be caged anytime.

Dr. Glenn: That's true. We call the pig an "it" because it doesn't deserve the dignity of a human pronoun.

Vanessa: Okay. Yeah. I guess I was calling him a "he" a lot.

Dr. Glenn: Most people do that in the beginning. How confident do you feel that you are never going to binge on sugar again?

Vanessa: I feel very confident. I listened to your podcast and I reinforced myself with the book and I really feel confident that it's not going to take over my life with sugar any longer. I feel very good about that.

Dr. Glenn: Could you give me a percentage?

Vanessa: I can't say a hundred percent because I'm so new at this, but I'd say at least a 95 percent.



Dr. Glenn: Ninety five percent?

Vanessa: Yeah, at this point.

Dr. Glenn: What does the pig say the reason is for that five percent?

Vanessa: It still is waving at me and wants to be put in my life and still trying to slip in that sugar is fine. The fact that he's waving at me kind of makes me angry -- or it, it's waving at me.

Dr. Glenn: It's got some nerve, right?

Vanessa: Yeah, it does.

Dr. Glenn: Vanessa, what we do in this situation is we make an artificial declaration. See, the pig has a game here. Because the pig is attached to your brainstem, we can't ever get rid of it. So there's kind of this presence that's underneath. Even when you're done with all the pig's reasons, there's this presence that's underneath and we can't get rid of that and that leaves people feeling uncertain or insecure about their ability to never binge again. The way that we beat that is we say, "Well, maybe I can't get rid of you, but I certainly can separate from you. And so I'm a hundred percent confident. I'm a hundred percent confident that I will never binge again," even if the pig has other ideas.

Vanessa: Oh, okay.

Dr. Glenn: And then whenever you hear the pig, since you know that you're a hundred percent confident, you know there are other ideas that are coming from the pig.



Vanessa: Okay. Oh okay, I understand that. That makes sense.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. Do you have any questions or concerns?

Vanessa: No. I appreciate this phone call. It's been very helpful.

Dr. Glenn: Vanessa, how confident are you that you're never going to have sugar again?

Vanessa: I'm a hundred percent confident.

Dr. Glenn: Are you sure?

Vanessa: Yes, I am sure.

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