

**Glenn Livingston, Ph.D.  
and Vanessa  
Dealing with Spouse's Pig**

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**Dr. Glenn:** Hey! It's the very good Dr. Glenn Livingston with Never Binge Again and I'm here with a familiar voice you might recognize from the last couple of years. We've done a few interviews. Her name is Vanessa. How are you, Vanessa?

**Vanessa:** I'm fine. How are you?

**Dr. Glenn:** I'm doing fine. You've had quite an ordeal these last six months yourself though, haven't you?

**Vanessa:** Oh yes, it's been a little rough with back surgery. I'm [Inaudible 00:00:19], so that's what's good.

**Dr. Glenn:** You're a very positive person. You managed to keep your pig in the cage over all the ordeals you went through with your back?

**Vanessa:** Yes. It was a little hard while I was in rehab, but I did the best I could do and then I realized there are some medical conditions that perhaps I had to go off my food plan a little bit.



**Dr. Glenn:** You might need to change your food plan a little bit when you have instructions from a doctor, right?

**Vanessa:** Yes, that's true, yeah.

**Dr. Glenn:** Yeah. It might not be your preferred food plan, but sometimes you have to make adjustments to accommodate those MDs, right?

**Vanessa:** Right, yes, but the good news is I'm back on it and I'm doing successfully and I'm really happy and healthy.

**Dr. Glenn:** Are you still at a decent weight?

**Vanessa:** No, no. That stopped, thank goodness. I'm where I want to be and I feel healthy and good, so I'm back on just the regular plan now.

**Dr. Glenn:** Okay. Well, you wanted to talk more today about dealing with spouses and significant others, right?

**Vanessa:** Yes, yes.

**Dr. Glenn:** You wanted to talk about how to do that without implanting electrical shocks in their clothing or anything like that, right?

**Vanessa:** Right, yes, and I really know that it's my spouse that's the hardest. I know that he's doing it because he's trying to be caring, but it's really not caring. He knows my food plan, but he constantly brings me things home from the grocery store. He gets excited and says, "I got you this and I got you that" and it's just pig slop. I'm just really getting frustrated with the whole thing.



**Dr. Glenn:** What do you say at those times?

**Vanessa:** Well, my pig does get excited, I must say, and tempt me but I'm able to cage it back up and just tell it I don't want these things. I've done so well and there's just no point in giving in at all.

**Dr. Glenn:** So the problem is that you can't control your husband because he would like you to eat some pig slop. He gets all excited about feeding you.

**Vanessa:** Yes. While I was in rehab, there were times I couldn't get to the kitchen and fix my own meals and he would bring me things that I couldn't eat even though he has an understanding, so I always question whether it's his pig doing this to me that's tempting my good things that I've done.

**Dr. Glenn:** Well, that's interesting. Say a little more about that.

**Vanessa:** He has an understanding and he knows what I want, but he brings me this stuff and I'm like, is this his pig trying to tempt me and trying to tempt my pig and my pig trying to give in for an excuse? I looked at it and I'm really tired of his pig. I just wish I could control it, but I don't know that I can because he's a different person.

**Dr. Glenn:** Ultimately, we want to get to the point where people could put pig slop right under our nose and do that every day all day long and we wouldn't take a bite. Ultimately, we want to get there, but it's still not a very nice thing to do if he knows that you have these goals and your health is at risk and your well-being is at risk. Ultimately, it's not a very nice thing to do. Tell me a little bit more about the interaction. What have you said to him about it? Have you tried to work this out?



**Vanessa:** Well, when he goes to the store and comes back excited that he brought me things, I tell him I appreciate it, but I really can't eat it, and he'll go so far as to put them on my plate too. I'm like, "I'm sorry, David, but I just cannot have this. I have my food plan that I'm following and I just would appreciate it if you would just help me too."

**Dr. Glenn:** Why do you tell him that you appreciate him?

**Vanessa:** Well, because I really think that he thinks he's doing the right thing and I want to acknowledge that. According to his beliefs, he's doing it and I can appreciate that, but I just don't want him giving me pig slop.

**Dr. Glenn:** What would you think about asking him to love you in some other way? Is there something else that you would appreciate, something else you'd prefer?

**Vanessa:** Yes. Yeah, that's a good thought. There are things like this morning, I was able to ask him to go with me for a walk and I really enjoyed that. Yeah, there are other ways that he could help me out.

**Dr. Glenn:** How else? How else could he help you?

**Vanessa:** Well, he could actually let me up to the point where I could go in the kitchen and fix things. I would like him to let me do that. He's very caring and just thinks he needs to do everything for me. He did at one point, but now I'm better and I could do it, so I would like to fix my own meals. I haven't gone to the store yet because it's a little hard to walk, but I can make him a list and tell him what I would like.

**Dr. Glenn:** Vanessa, have you explained this to him that this is what you want?



**Vanessa:** No, I really haven't taken that step.

**Dr. Glenn:** How come?

**Vanessa:** How come?

**Dr. Glenn:** Yeah.

**Vanessa:** I guess I really didn't think about it. I'm just so focused on what he brings me that's wrong and trying not to have a battle over that, so I guess I feel like I've had to fight the fight.

**Dr. Glenn:** Yeah. Our spouses have pigs also, but they don't have to recognize them if they don't want to.

**Vanessa:** Yeah.

**Dr. Glenn:** It's up to them whether they want to define it as a pig. It's up to them. When you're married or when you're in a relationship for a long time and there are all these patterns established, it can be very confusing for a spouse when you become a very different person. You don't want to accept love in the same way that you did before. I hear this a lot. I've heard from a lot of people that "We were eating buddies and it was one of our favorite things to do together."

I spend too much time on dating sites these days, but you go on the dating sites and a lot of people advertise that they're real foodies and they want someone to go to restaurants with. I went out on a date on Friday night, a very, very sweet woman, very pretty, intelligent, but she just couldn't deal with the way that I ate. She was like, "So I can't feed



you this and I can't feed you that?" and I said there are other parts of a relationship and there are all these videos on YouTube about how to make things that I really do like and can eat and feel good about, but it's a very powerful thing. People are brought up in a particular way. This woman, for example, she was brought up in a Lebanese family and the way that they showed love is to share all this delicious food and it just happens to be pig slop for me. Most of what they would eat would be pig slop. I don't want her to feel like there's anything wrong with her and she wants to do that out of a way that she knows how to express love, but it's pretty confusing to people when someone suddenly changes. It's very confusing if they don't know how to love you with food in the way that they're accustomed to loving someone with food.

In my case, because I'm single, I can choose to find someone who I don't have quite that mountain to climb to start with, but if you're married for a lot of years, there's an educational process you have to go through usually gently at first. We can assume they're doing it on purpose to hurt you. Until we really know that, you've told them 40 or 50 times how you do want to be loved and then if they refuse to do them and just keep going back to the old stuff then you can be a little more aggressive.

From what you're describing, I don't think David really knows how you want to be loved now with food. I don't think he really knows that. I don't think he knows that you want to fix your own meals or you want him to bring you some other kinds of things. I think that you're inadvertently reinforcing him by telling him you appreciate what he's doing as opposed to being more specific about you appreciate that he wants to love you with food. You appreciate that he wants to bring you



things and he could bring these other things for you instead. What do you think about all this?

**Vanessa:** I think that's the truth and I can see it now. I can see how I probably inadvertently sent him wrong messages. I really think too that he grew up in a home that food was love and he wants to continue that, but I haven't been clear enough to tell him that I can be loved in other ways. I was thinking too, he could just bring me flowers or something from nature and that would be fine. I would love that. I need to talk to him about that and make him more aware.

**Dr. Glenn:** I think he really wants to do that. I think he's legitimately confused.

**Vanessa:** Yes, I do too. I really do.

**Dr. Glenn:** Talk to me more specifically about how David could love you in a way that would be acceptable now.

**Vanessa:** I would like him to leave the food issues alone. I don't want him to jeopardize my food plan in any way. I need to explain that more to him and actually give him a copy of it, but he could love me in so many other ways like this morning when we were on our walk, we have a bird that made a nest in our mailbox, so he excitedly showed me that the eggs hatched and mama bird was there 'cause she usually flies out at you. That kind of thing is fun, just to see him get excited. He knows the flowers in the garden and our fruit trees and I really need to share in that excitement with him and boost him up and that would really make me happy.

**Dr. Glenn:** Yeah. It sounds like that would make you really happy.



**Vanessa:** Yeah. It's fun. We need to have some fun in our life.

**Dr. Glenn:** Well, it's something you could share with him. It's an emotional moment you could share with him as opposed to the food.

**Vanessa:** Right, yeah. I need to do that more and not pick fights with his pig, as I'd call it.

**Dr. Glenn:** Yes, that's exactly right. Don't pick a fight with your spouse's pig. One of the ways that you stay focused on that is to focus on what you want as opposed to what you don't want and figure out how to phrase things in the positive because your pig is going to want you to blame his pig. Your pig is going to say, "Don't you know that she can't eat that? Oh well, it's your fault. You tempted her too much. She's going to have to get some slop." That's what your pig is going to want to do and you can counter that by phrasing things in the positive. "Hey, David, could we focus more on all the little things like the bird's nest in the mailbox and what happened with our kids the other day or what we did outside in nature? Do you think you could bring me some flowers?" Focus on what you want and encourage him to tell you what he wants also.

**Vanessa:** Okay. Yeah.

**Dr. Glenn:** You say, "I just hate talking about food. I really want to start making my own food. I'll take care of it. You're so sweet, but I'll take care of it."

**Vanessa:** Okay. That's good, yeah. I like that, the wording of that and the concept, very much. I'm excited now that I can be positive and tell him these things and coming at it at a different angle.



**Dr. Glenn:** Do you think he'll respond?

**Vanessa:** I think he will. He listens really well at times, the times that don't center on the food, but I think he wants me healthy in the long run and he wants me to be where I am. I lost a lot of weight. I think I look good and I think he thinks I do. I'm going to focus on that too, not the weight loss, but the more of feeling really good, and talk to him about other things than food to make me happy.

**Dr. Glenn:** Tell me some more other things.

**Vanessa:** Well, we've been under a lot of stress lately in our life, and so it's been a struggle with the pig and when he's there bringing me things. The pig wants to give in, but I've been able to cage him and I want to keep him there, but we need to find other outlets. He'll be home more now that he retired from work, so I see that as a little challenge. What do we do? What can we do? Go out to eat and that kind of thing. I don't really enjoy going out right now to eat.

**Dr. Glenn:** Can you go out to a park? Do you have parks near you?

**Vanessa:** Yes. Yes, we do, a really beautiful one. I can walk there of course with my walker right now, so that's okay. I want him to take the joy too in how much I am doing for myself physically. Just the little things that people take for granted, I'm doing. After the surgery, I couldn't even stand and now I'm to the point where I can walk. I'm trying to get to the point of walking with a cane. He's really supportive of that. I tell him the little things and he gets really happy about that because he never even stopped when I couldn't do a lot of things, as simple as getting in a car. He had to help me with my legs. Now, I can do that. We rejoice in all that and that's what I want to tell him too, is these little things are



really important to me and it would make me happy if he would just say, "That's great! You're doing wonderful" instead of asking me, "Do you need help? Do you need help?" I'm like, "No, I don't need help." Along with food issues, I can take care of myself in a lot of ways that I couldn't before, and he listens to that. He really does. The food issues are going to be a little harder, but in the long run, he will listen. I know he will.

**Dr. Glenn:** What's going to be hard with the food now?

**Vanessa:** Well, just that it's constant still. He hasn't grasped the whole food plan thing. He does have to help me get pans out and things like that. He'll go, "Do you want a pan and make grilled cheese?" and I'm like, "Oh no, thank you. I just need a pan to scramble an egg," little things again. He does understand. He does it just once, so he's not nagging me or anything. It's just that he goes onto a different food item like, "How about a piece of pie?" and I'm like, oh dear, no.

**Dr. Glenn:** Does he know what you're supposed to eat or what you're not supposed to eat? Does he know?

**Vanessa:** I told him, but I think that he really needs to read my food plan and I think that'll give him a great understanding. I just tell him I eat a lot of fruits and vegetables.

**Dr. Glenn:** You might need to have a list of things you're not eating anymore.

**Vanessa:** Oh, okay, the specific things I'm not eating.

**Dr. Glenn:** This guy loves you. I don't think he's doing this to sabotage you. A lot of people make that assumption first. They don't recognize that their



pig is getting all excited about it and interacting with their spouse's pig. I think maybe there's some of that. Everything you've ever told me about David sounds like he's a really fine man who loves you dearly. Of course he's got his problems like all of us guys do. It sounds like he loves you. It sounds like this guy loves you and he needs some more guidance and education. If you give that to him and you repeat it a few dozen times very gently and then he's still doing it, well then we can make another assumption. I don't think that's going to happen. I think he just needs some education.

**Vanessa:** Yes. Yeah, I think so. We've been married 40 years and I finished a lot in that 40 years, so it is a change. It's a big change for him to see me eating healthier.

**Dr. Glenn:** Vanessa, what would it mean to you to have the full cooperation of your husband with love to stick to your food plan? What would that mean to you? What would be better in your life if you had that in 30 days or 90 days or a year? What would be better?

**Vanessa:** I just saw this concept. It would be like the circle would be complete with my journey with the food plan and getting healthy. At the very end, it needs to come together with him and I know it will. I just have to be gentle, like you said, and compassionate with him and show him what I can eat and what I can't eat as far as fixing my plate and say, "This is what I really want and this is what is healthy for me."

**Dr. Glenn:** What does your pig say that you can't do with him? What does your pig say you can't work this out?

**Vanessa:** The pig says, "You're under a lot of stress and he's just offering you slop. You can have one bite. It won't hurt you" when in the long run, it



will hurt me because it could start a binge and I don't want to go there. So the pig is at times coming out and really tempting me, saying that -- David would bring me one thing and I won't eat it, then he'll bring me another thing that's pig slop and I won't eat it, and the pig says, "Just have a little bite. It really won't hurt you. You deserve it. You've been under a lot of stress and this should comfort you." Those are things the pig says.

**Dr. Glenn:** Where is it lying to you when it says that you're under so much stress and one bite is not going to hurt?

**Vanessa:** Right. It's deceptive and they're lies. It's totally a place I don't want to go again. I tell the pig, "Just go to sleep. Stay in your cage. I don't want to hear from you."

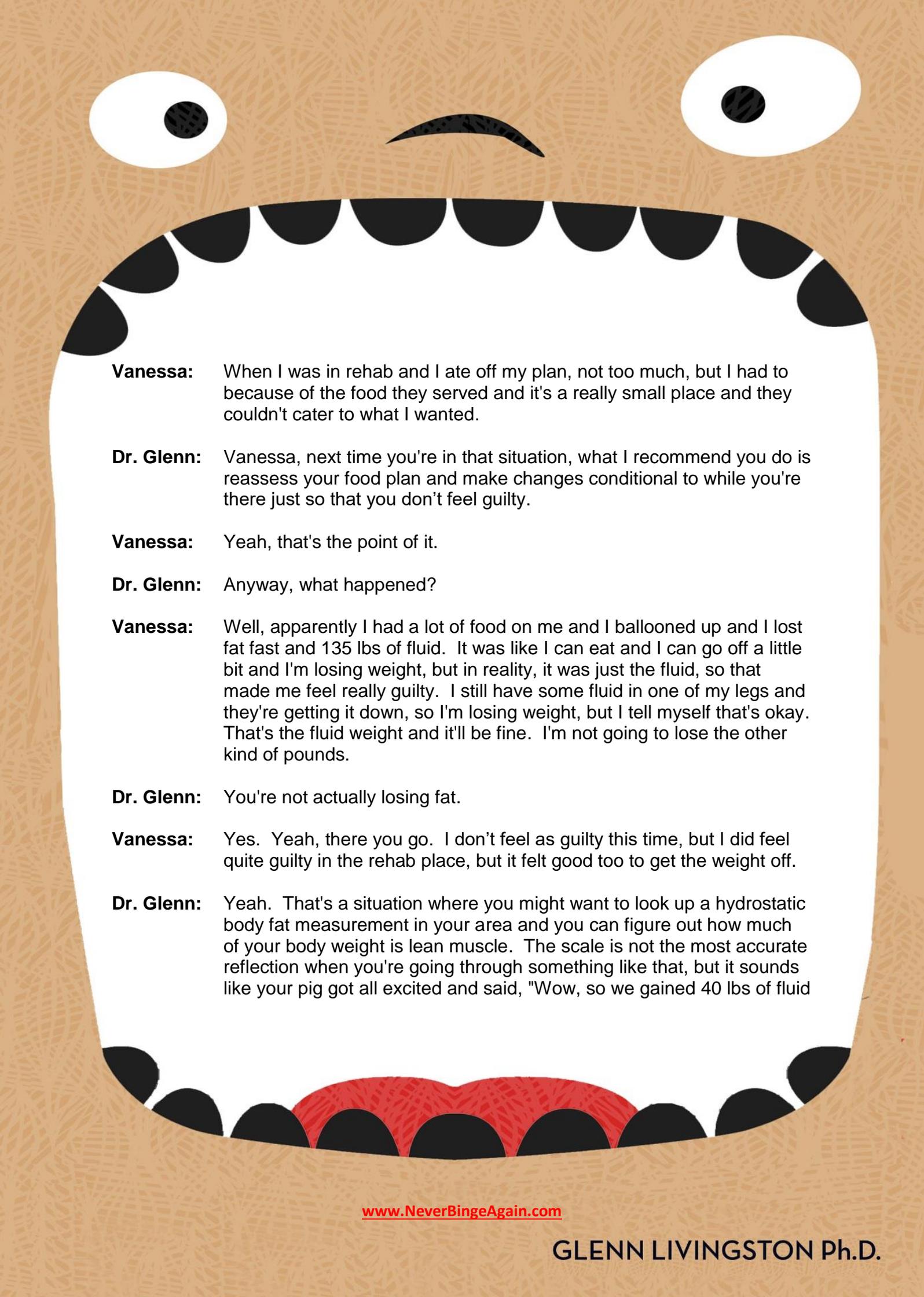
**Dr. Glenn:** You lost more than 100 lbs, right?

**Vanessa:** Yes, about 150 actually, but I'm going to gain some of that back because I need it to.

**Dr. Glenn:** You're underweight?

**Vanessa:** Yes. Yeah. I couldn't believe it, but the surgery really took a lot out of me. I guess that's a question too in a sense that was that okay that I lost the weight with the surgery?

**Dr. Glenn:** I don't totally understand what happened. Tell me specifically with numbers what happened with the surgery.



**Vanessa:** When I was in rehab and I ate off my plan, not too much, but I had to because of the food they served and it's a really small place and they couldn't cater to what I wanted.

**Dr. Glenn:** Vanessa, next time you're in that situation, what I recommend you do is reassess your food plan and make changes conditional to while you're there just so that you don't feel guilty.

**Vanessa:** Yeah, that's the point of it.

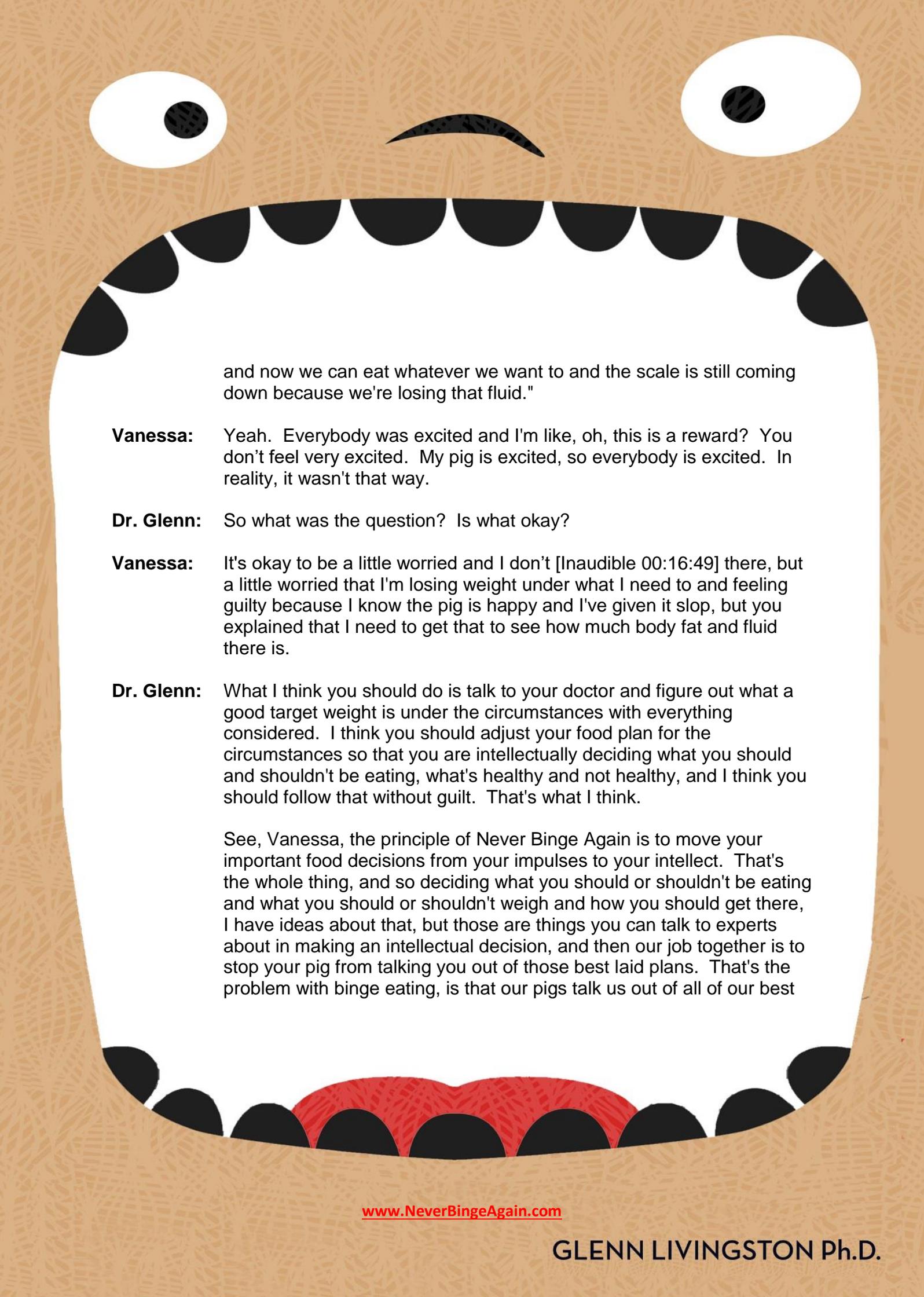
**Dr. Glenn:** Anyway, what happened?

**Vanessa:** Well, apparently I had a lot of food on me and I ballooned up and I lost fat fast and 135 lbs of fluid. It was like I can eat and I can go off a little bit and I'm losing weight, but in reality, it was just the fluid, so that made me feel really guilty. I still have some fluid in one of my legs and they're getting it down, so I'm losing weight, but I tell myself that's okay. That's the fluid weight and it'll be fine. I'm not going to lose the other kind of pounds.

**Dr. Glenn:** You're not actually losing fat.

**Vanessa:** Yes. Yeah, there you go. I don't feel as guilty this time, but I did feel quite guilty in the rehab place, but it felt good too to get the weight off.

**Dr. Glenn:** Yeah. That's a situation where you might want to look up a hydrostatic body fat measurement in your area and you can figure out how much of your body weight is lean muscle. The scale is not the most accurate reflection when you're going through something like that, but it sounds like your pig got all excited and said, "Wow, so we gained 40 lbs of fluid



and now we can eat whatever we want to and the scale is still coming down because we're losing that fluid."

**Vanessa:** Yeah. Everybody was excited and I'm like, oh, this is a reward? You don't feel very excited. My pig is excited, so everybody is excited. In reality, it wasn't that way.

**Dr. Glenn:** So what was the question? Is what okay?

**Vanessa:** It's okay to be a little worried and I don't [Inaudible 00:16:49] there, but a little worried that I'm losing weight under what I need to and feeling guilty because I know the pig is happy and I've given it slop, but you explained that I need to get that to see how much body fat and fluid there is.

**Dr. Glenn:** What I think you should do is talk to your doctor and figure out what a good target weight is under the circumstances with everything considered. I think you should adjust your food plan for the circumstances so that you are intellectually deciding what you should and shouldn't be eating, what's healthy and not healthy, and I think you should follow that without guilt. That's what I think.

See, Vanessa, the principle of Never Binge Again is to move your important food decisions from your impulses to your intellect. That's the whole thing, and so deciding what you should or shouldn't be eating and what you should or shouldn't weigh and how you should get there, I have ideas about that, but those are things you can talk to experts about in making an intellectual decision, and then our job together is to stop your pig from talking you out of those best laid plans. That's the problem with binge eating, is that our pigs talk us out of all of our best



thinking. The more you can acquire the ability to move these decisions from your impulses to your intellect, the better you're going to do.

**Vanessa:** I like that, yes. I understand it now clearly.

**Dr. Glenn:** What questions or concerns do you have about David or your fluid weight or anything else?

**Vanessa:** I'm at a good place after talking with you and I'm going to make the list of foods that I can eat and give it to David, just talk to him kindly and let him know other ways that he can show his love. I really like that. I know it'll be a good thing.

**Dr. Glenn:** Can you get out a little index card and make it for me to carry around for a little while?

**Vanessa:** Yes, I can do that.

**Dr. Glenn:** What I want you to say in the index card is "Focus on what you want, not on what you don't want."

**Vanessa:** Okay.

**Dr. Glenn:** Focus on what you want with him. Let all your communications be oriented to what you want. Assume innocence. Assume innocence until you know otherwise. Trust, but verify. Assume this guy wants to help you. Let's see what happens after that.

**Vanessa:** Okay. Yeah, that's good. Yeah, I believe he wants to help me. He's just lost and I need to guide him on the way that my life has changed and what I'm doing.



**Dr. Glenn:** Vanessa, it's a really big deal that he retired. When I was a couples' therapist, I saw so many couples right after the husband retired and they were driving each other crazy, so it's good you're thinking about how to handle this. It's a big adjustment.

**Vanessa:** Yes, I know. I'm ready for it. He's my best friend and it's fun to live life with him. I know there are times it'll be different, but I'm excited about it actually and do things and not have to worry about getting back for a job.

**Dr. Glenn:** Okay, dear, that sounds terrific. Anything else before we start to wind down?

**Vanessa:** No. I really appreciate this and how it's much clearer despite everything.

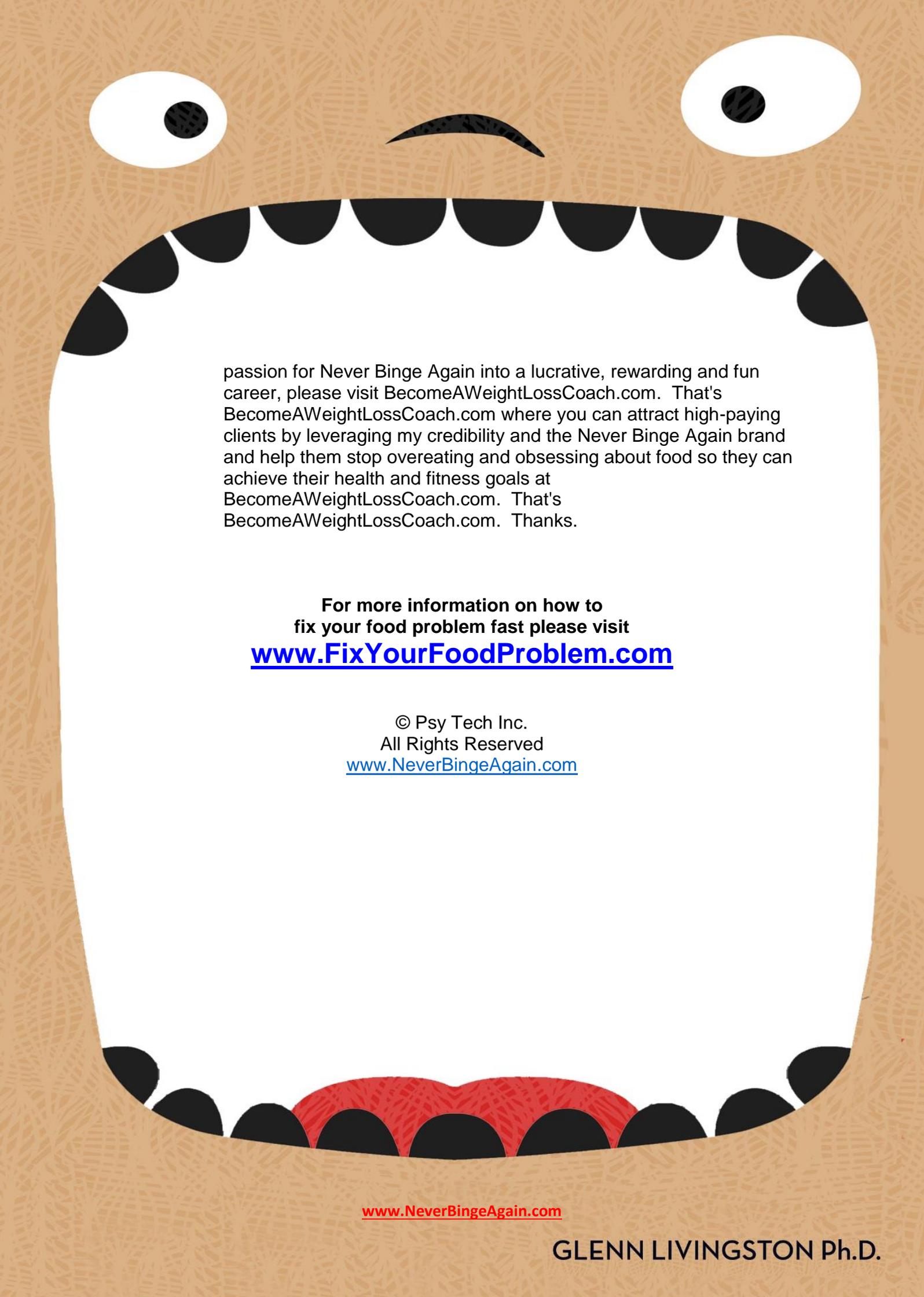
**Dr. Glenn:** Vanessa, you're doing terrific. I'm so proud of you. The whole thing, you're doing terrific.

**Vanessa:** Oh. Well, I'm so grateful, grateful to you and grateful of your book and you're writing more books. That's exciting too.

**Dr. Glenn:** Have a wonderful afternoon. I'll talk to you soon.

**Vanessa:** Thank you. Okay. Bye-bye.

**Dr. Glenn:** Thanks for your time and attention. If you need personal coaching to fix your food problem fast, please visit [FixYourFoodProblem.com](http://FixYourFoodProblem.com). [FixYourFoodProblem.com](http://FixYourFoodProblem.com). If you'd like to become a certified professional Never Binge Again independent coach and turn your



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