



Barbara – First Meeting

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Dr. Glenn: Hey, this is Glenn Livingston with Never Binge Again, and I'm here with a very nice woman whose name is Barbara who's agreed to work with us a little bit with regards to some struggles she's having with her own eating and let you hear how she works that through with regards to the Never Binge Again philosophy. Barbara, how are you today?

Barbara: I'm very good. I'm in Minneapolis and we're having a big wind storm right now, so I'm glad to be indoors and talking to you.

Dr. Glenn: That's not unusual in Minneapolis is it?

Barbara: We've had a beautiful fall until today. So I think they're turning.

Dr. Glenn: The one time that I was in Minneapolis, I flew there from Naples, Florida and it was 110 degrees in Naples, Florida and when I got off the plane, it was minus 35.

Barbara: Oh dear. Oh the worst for most of the January, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: I thought maybe the pilot made a mistake and landed on Mars.

Barbara: Yes. The winters, it never ends.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. Anyway Barbara, looking forward to speaking with you today, I was wondering if I could just ask you, what would you most like to accomplish? How



How could I be most helpful? I know you read the book, heard the podcast interview. How could I be most helpful to you?

Barbara: Well certainly, I would like some help on developing a food plan. I can get the big pig squeals like I wanted to go eat some cookies but the more subtle things. I mean have a very seductive pig and I get caught in some of the mistaking the pig

and self-nurturing or pleasure seeking. It's a grey area in there for me that I'd like to get clear about.

Dr. Glenn: Your pig tends to confuse you and sneaks some squeals through in the guise of self-nurturing and pleasure seeking, is that what you're saying?

Barbara: Yup. And rewards through food, how you've worked hard, you're feeling a little lonely. You deserve something that tastes good. Why don't you go out to eat? Why don't you do take out tonight? You really don't have to work hard to fix food for yourself.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. We can definitely do that.

Barbara: So living alone, I do a lot of socializing, eating out. And when I eat out, I'm not binging but I'm not eating in my best interest at times.

Dr. Glenn: Is that where the most damage is done?

Barbara: No. I would say the most damage is done with me driving near Southdale and remembering that Good Earth has molasses cookies, ginger cookies with icing on them. And I think, oh that's sounds good, I'll go get one of those. And they're giant, they're about the equivalent of four cookies and maybe I need to two instead of just one. That's I think overall where I get in the most trouble.

Dr. Glenn: And have there been days when you just have one or do you typically have difficulty stopping with just one?



Barbara: No. I sometimes just have one. I don't know what the calorie count is but it's got to be huge.

Dr. Glenn: One of the ways that we could start with people successfully is just to isolate one rule for their food plan that would make them feel protected with their

worst trigger. Do you feel like that's something that would be helpful to you or do you feel like you need more of a comprehensive plan to go forward?

Barbara: No. I would like one step of success at a time. I feel overwhelmed by the whole thing but one thing I think that would be really good for me to focus.

Dr. Glenn: Do you have thoughts about what that one thing might be?

Barbara: I would say sugar.

Dr. Glenn: And how do you define sugar?

Barbara: I'm thinking of sugar and food like cupcakes, cakes, cookie sugar and fat combination that I eat for strictly pleasure like it's not part of a dessert with friends at the end of a meal. It's me numbing out in some way, seeking pleasure. So it's the cakes, cookies, chocolate.

Dr. Glenn: The reason I'm being a little more specific about it is because we had a very clear line in the sand. It sounds like you don't have any discomfort thinking about a pig inside of you kind of understand the purpose and the way that you used these --

Barbara: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. We need to be a little more specific about it so that the pig can sneak something by us later. So I'm going to brainstorm a couple of ideas out loud and you tell me if you have other ideas, okay?



Barbara: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: It could be something as simple as sugar is defined as cakes, cookies or chocolate. Those are the three things that you mentioned. Is there any other form of sugar that you can get in trouble with?

Barbara: I can get in trouble with ice cream.

Dr. Glenn: Cakes, cookies, chocolate and ice cream. Is that the only way that sugar can upset your diet?

Barbara: I'd sometimes eat it bag of licorice. So what is that, candy?

Dr. Glenn: Mm-hmm. So we could make a list of all the offending foods and we'll talk about whether we want to eliminate them or regulate them. I've worked with some people who say, "Well it's just easier to say the only sweet taste in my diet is going to be whole fruit and berries," or whole fruit and berries and stevia or something like that. Tell me a little bit more about your history with sugar. When have you done well with it and when have you done badly with it.

Barbara: Well I remember the point when I was 17 years old and I was off at college. I've never been anything like binging on any kind of food. And I remember my mother said, when she went to college on Friday afternoon, she'd get a candy bar. It was kind of a treat for the week. And so I did that for a couple of weeks and then I remember one Friday night, I felt really lonely at college. I didn't have a date, everybody else seemed like they were going out and I remember consciously thinking, well who needs that? I can just get myself two candy bars. And it was like some kind of shift in my brain of, "I don't need that. I'll just take care of myself with pleasure, a food."

I remember starting to use food then as kind of a pleasure or a treat or if one is good, two is better.



Dr. Glenn: To get high with food, right?

Barbara: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Go on Barbara, I'm sorry to interrupt you.

Barbara: Also then, I remember using food after I was divorced. At that point, I started gaining weight. I kind of got away with it for a number of years and then it was like, I remember eating a whole bag of M&Ms at one time, a big bag and being very depressed. That was a tough time in my life and really got in to using food, feeling miserable, depressed and just numbing out with food. That was a long time ago. I haven't used food like that for a long time but I continue to treat myself just short of getting really drunk on food but getting high for sure, looking forward to a treat and going and getting it.

Dr. Glenn: Let's talk a little bit more about what you want with sugar. One of the real tenets of this is that we all have to decide for ourselves what the right way to eat is. Some people feel that for themselves in their own goals and aspirations that they just want it out of their life. There's a particular substance that it's too pleasurable. It's too uncomfortable to try to stop themselves in the middle of it and have a control treat now and then they just want it out of their life. And there are other people that very successfully moderate it. I'm wondering where you stand with that right now. Do you feel like you've been beaten up so much by sugar that even if you might feel lonely or depressed or upset that you'd feel like to have it out of your life and you feel like your life would get better overtime if you did that?

Barbara: Yeah. I'd definitely think that's the case. I went for five years without any sugar or white flour and I definitely felt better. Yes, I would definitely like to have it out of my life.

Dr. Glenn: Then let's go back to how we define that. For those five years, how did you define sugar?



Barbara: Sugar had to be if there's more ingredient in anything.

Dr. Glenn: So you read labels.

Barbara: I did.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. And did those labels include all forms of sugar like dextrose or fructose or other forms?

Barbara: Yeah, everything.

Dr. Glenn: Do you feel really confident in what those definitions are that you won't be fooled?

Barbara: Yes. So I've always thought it needs to be either all or nothing and then I'm looking at this conditional. And I'm thinking, well, what about the special treat on Christmas or a birthday. Then I notice since I'm starting thinking about that, I'm starting to put energy into that. Well, would that include my friend's birthday or my grandchildren? And then it suddenly gets all murky again. So, kind of shut the door and after that, the moment I really did not crave it or want it or it was out of my life and a lot easier for me.

My wisdom of myself says yes, that is the thing to do. Perhaps the pig is wanting to open this other door of, oh maybe it could occasional.

Dr. Glenn: Life is better when sugar is out of your life and your pig tells you you're going to feel deprived, you're not going to be able to have that special treat at Christmas or your son's birthday or anything like that. But you Barbara, you feel that it would be a great relief to be rid of it.

Barbara: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: Was there a pause?



Barbara: I have no doubt my life would be better. Yes, I discovered life went on without it and it was just fine. I've tried to do it a million times since 2009 and have been unable to pull it off. So it's about doubt and can I really find this inner authority to stay with it on my own.

Dr. Glenn: Okay we're going to talk about fixing that in a minute. I know what the pig says you're going to be giving up if you stop eating sugar. What are you going to give up if you don't?

Barbara: Well when I eat sugar, I get tired, my brain gets fuzzy, I lose motivation and drive, I have difficulty sleeping, I get into self-recrimination and self-hatred and all kinds of self-judgment. I'm less sociable. I'm more probing with my own drama inside than I am in contact with the outer world, so weight gain, I mean feeling fat, being fat, you know, lots of really strong negatives.

Dr. Glenn: If you weigh the two sides of that, is it worth putting up with all of those negatives in order to have sugar once in a while?

Barbara: No, no. I would like to just make a single decision and stop spending time obsessing or wondering or second guessing.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. Would you want to talk about how you gave it up for five years before?

Barbara: I was in the OA HOW program following the willow food plan and it was part of the rules of the game of no sugar, no flour, weighing and measuring everything that I ate.

Dr. Glenn: And you had to report into a sponsor?

Barbara: Everyday, yup, food plan, did a series of written exercises.



Dr. Glenn: And they had you stand up and say you were a compulsive overeater and that you really couldn't control yourself against a temptation that there's really no human defense against.

Barbara: Exactly. Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: And how did you feel about all that?

Barbara: I have been involved in OA before and I always had an issue kind of with the disease concept. But what affected me was going to a meeting with 50 skinny people in the room and somehow, they were standing up and saying all of it and they were successful looking thin to me. It gave me my first success ever on a diet, was to follow whatever they said to do I did. I ignored whatever feelings I had and just soldiered through and experienced so many positives and so much momentum. It was okay until one day it wasn't anymore.

Dr. Glenn: What happen that it wasn't okay anymore?

Barbara: I think people I respected started to kind of challenge it. They watched me bring my food everywhere I went and I get very hyper about have I done everything I'm supposed to do and they gave me feedback that it looked like this was really taken over. And they said, yes, for this much time, it seems like you had to be able to do this on your own. You surely know what three ounce of the chicken looks like. So I started getting more and more feedback and then I went to this Rancho La Puerta, this healthy place and it just suddenly in the moment didn't make sense to me anymore. I should be able to make these decisions. So for a time I did and then I didn't.

Dr. Glenn: What you're describing is very common experience. So first of all, you don't know when you walk into that room what percentage those 50 people represent. So it might be that 5,000 people went through the room before you found those 50 people that got skinny and stayed there. And when they do scientific studies on the 12-step programs which are very, very difficult to do, there's really no



proof. There's really no proof that it works. It either comes out at parity to doing nothing or worse. It's kind of an interesting fact when you go into these programs and I was part of these programs for several years too and they'll tell you this is really the only way, like if you have this disease then this is the only cure and it's not even a cure it's something you're going to have to suffer with the rest of your life.

And it's a philosophy of dependence. It's a philosophy of you got to hang out with these people who can't solve a problem on their own either because they have a disease and they could relapse at any moment and you can't quit, you can only stop for one day at a time. And I have to tell you, from what I have seen, the work I did to research it and the patients and clients that I've worked it, it's just not true. The people who do successfully quit by and large don't do it through a 12-step program, they do it by making a line on the stand and making a decision and saying, "Okay, well I ate this particular the way in my youth and now I'm a little more grown up and I want these other things for myself and I'm giving up all these other stuff by not making this decision. Let's just do it. I'm tired of doubting myself. I'm tired of having everybody second guess me. I don't want to be overseen and define my whole life according to what these people are telling me. I want to use my energies to accomplish other things and just eat well."

It's a restoration of freewill and responsibility and it can be difficult when you spent a lot of years in a system like that and you have had the experience that that was the only thing that ever worked. If it were really the only thing that ever worked for you, that's what I would want you do. If I really believe that was the only thing that could ever work, I don't believe that. I don't personally believe that from what I've seen. How do you feel about that? Do you feel like leaving you astray?

Barbara: Well you just nailed it. I mean if there was something else and that if I could do that, I would definitely choose to be that. It's just my experience. So far I haven't found that solution yet. I'm open. I would love -- I mean freewill and responsibility, that is what I would like to take back.



Dr. Glenn: I would like to explain to you then what we typically observe when we work with people of these days because I'm about to ask you some very pointed questions to bring your pig to the surface and it might feel a little uncomfortable but I want you train you think that this is discomfort for your pig and not for you personally. What we typically observe when we ask people about if they're willing to make him a commitment to never have sugar again for example between now and the day that

you die, most people immediately recoil from that and say "Well, I could say that I'm going to do that but I don't know what if I break it and then I'm going to feel guilty."

They're reluctant to take the lead because they'll have a whole set of feelings and they don't know that those feelings are coming from the pig. Let me just address what happens if you were to make a mistake. And this is kind of a paradoxical way of thinking because you have to have two thoughts simultaneously.

And you might think about it when you were trying to give your son confidence. I think you said you have son, right? Did you have a son?

Barbara: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: When your son was little and you wanted to give him confidence about something he wanted to accomplish, remember when he was maybe five or six years old and there was something he wanted to accomplish?

Barbara: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Glenn: What was that?

Barbara: He loved actually playing basketball and wanted to be able to get better at it.

Dr. Glenn: So he wanted to make the team or something like that?



Barbara: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Glenn: Okay so maybe this won't fit perfectly into your memories but if your son wanted to make the team when he was five or six years old, the first grade team if they have such a thing, what you would tell him is, "You can definitely do that. I've got a hundred percent confidence you can make the team. Let's go out with gusto and do our best and don't distract yourself with the possibility of doubt and failure.

Let's put all your energy into making the team. And if you happen not to, which I don't even want you think about, then I'll help you. We'll look at what went wrong and we'll figure out what we need to do differently the next time and we will get up again and go up with renewed gusto and try out for the team again until we 100 percent get there, or like a mountain you're trying to climb. It's a really big mountain and you want to see the top. You want to get to the top."

What you don't say to your son at that point is, "You know, you're probably not going to make it on the first try so don't even think about it, just progress not perfection. Do the best you can." See, it sounds like the compassionate message but it turns out that the people who actually make it to the top, people that make the team, they got more hundred percent confident messages.

That's what Never Binge Again is about. It's about using a type of thinking and a strategy so that you can put the possibility of failure out of your mind and in doing that, you can clearly hear when the pig is squealing because as soon as you say, "I'm never going to have sugar again between now and the day that I die," you hear all those little voices in your head that say, "Well, what about that molasses cookie or what about the special treat on Christmas or your son's birthday?" or all the other things that it might say, that all becomes pig squeal, that all becomes something that you can immediately identify as not you. You can associate it with all those negative things you talked to me about before and you can just ignore it. You don't have to debate with the pig, you can just ignore it. What do you think about that?



Barbara: Well I definitely recognize the seduction that I've fallen into, the progress not perfection that I tried to coach myself with and trying that to do absolute all or nothing and yet the thing that I go back to what has worked for me, it worked for me when I absolutely -- I mean what abstinence was and what's going to stay with us because I wanted what I saw off of your head. So, I get it. I was thinking about how you just designed the seminar yesterday and had 20 people come and did it. It was so interesting that it took two days and I was really working hard on it. And I had all

these gaps of confidence and oh geez, is this really going to work? Are they going to like this?

But I was aware having read your book, there was no giving up. I knew I was going to do it. And it was a dissociation from the fact that I know how to accomplish this, I can get it done. So I must apply it somewhere in my professional life that I will deliver, I will get there, I'm not going to give up on this, some bumpy roads but I'll stay with it. That's more foreign for me when it comes to food. First time the pig squeals I collapse and go, "Yeah okay, we'll start this tomorrow."

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. Are you ever going to have even one bite of sugar between now and the day that you die?

Barbara: No.

Dr. Glenn: How confident are you?

Barbara: How confident am I? I would say I'm 51 percent confident.

Dr. Glenn: Tell me what the pig is saying. What's the other 49 percent?

Barbara: Let's see. So the pig is saying, "Well, can you really think between now and the time you die? There might be circumstances that arise and you might get over really being such a binger or you may lose a taste for sugar. And maybe someday, so it's not wanting to be committed not wanting to the day I die."



Dr. Glenn: What circumstances does the pig say are going to get you?

Barbara: Something fun. The places when I've gone off diet before, it's often around something good that happened and I get in a "good mood." I feel successful. Things are really working and suddenly, "Oh yeah. I could have a slice of cake like everybody else." So that I'm very vulnerable there around good feelings and I'm feeling kind of normal like, "Oh, I could do that."

Dr. Glenn: Have you experienced good feelings and confidence where you didn't do that?

Barbara: Where I didn't eat?

Dr. Glenn: Where you didn't break your abstinence? When you continued to eat well?

Barbara: Yes I have, I mean five years' worth, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: How did you take care of yourself during those times?

Barbara: I was clear on what I was going to eat and just kind of followed my plan and didn't change it because I felt good.

Dr. Glenn: So you're saying something really important, you're saying that if you focused on the health benefits and what was happening in your life physically when you had these good feelings, if that was enough of a celebration for you and your pig thinks that the only way to celebrate is the sugar.

Barbara: True.

Dr. Glenn: Barbara there's one more thing that you said that is important and it's kind of a remnant I think from your experience with the 12-step program. You said, as if you were normal. I know that in the 12-step programs, they work hard to



convince you that you're not normal and that you've got what's either a defect of character or a genetic defect or something that makes you really sick, really sick and disease when it comes to food. And that the only way you're ever going to abstain if you keep smacking yourself in the head and reminding yourself that you're not normal. There's another way to look at that.

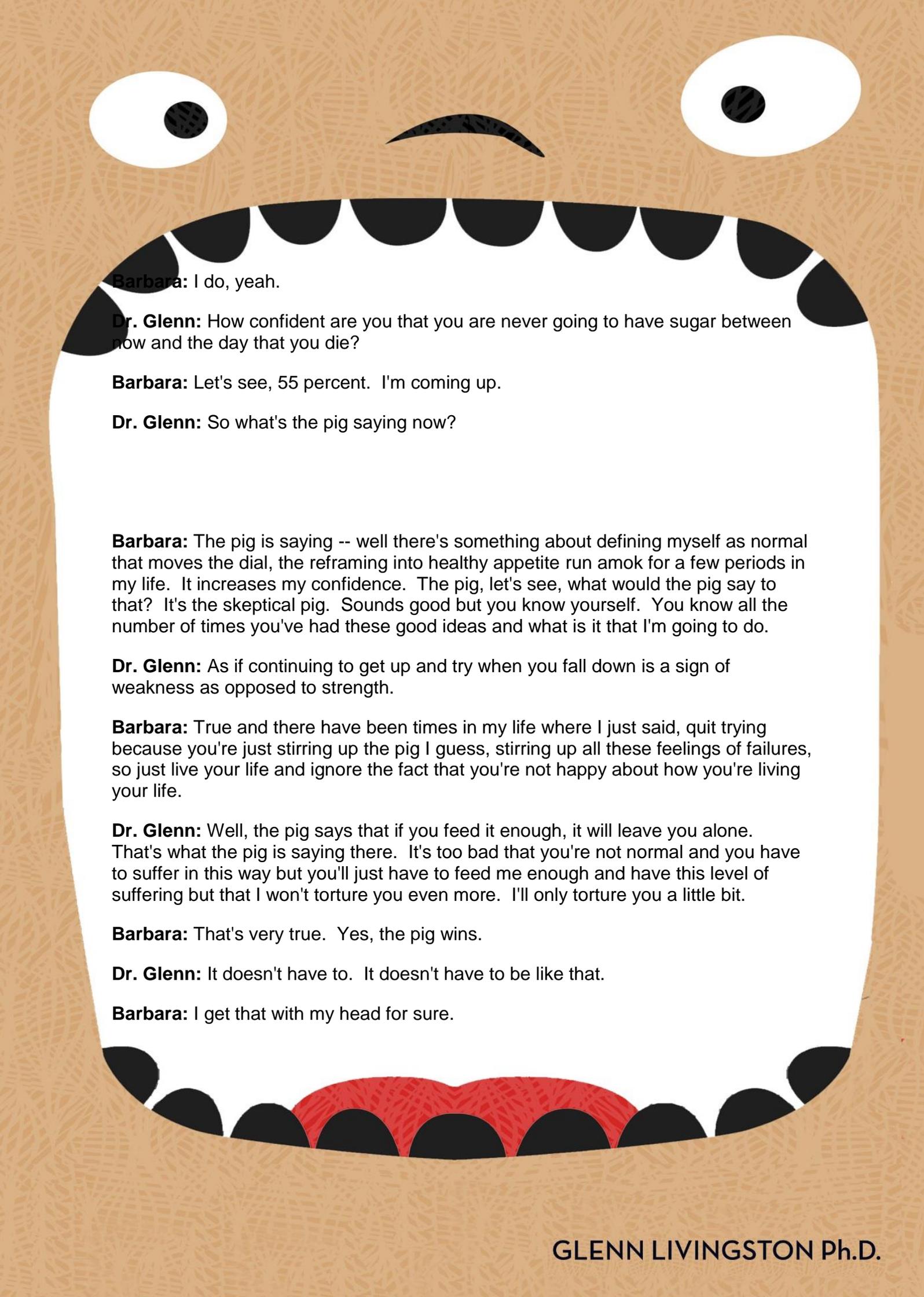
Barbara: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: You can decide that there are certain types of pleasures that you just choose to abstain from because you've decided to focus your life on other types of pleasures. And it's because you have a healthy appetite, you were born with a healthy appetite and you had some experiences that connected that appetite to these kinds of foods in certain situations, but that's a sign of health not sickness. And the reason that it's important to switch your perspective like that in my experience is that you want to start explaining to your pig and really just knowing for yourself that you have tremendous strength inside of you. You have strength inside of you to decide what you want to eat and what you don't want to eat.

And if you let the pig keep telling you that you're not normal and you're sick and you're diseased, it will wear you down. We don't want to let it say any of those things. We are healthy people with healthy appetites and we got carried away with those healthy appetites at certain times in our lives and because of that reason, we chose to either regulate or eliminate certain foods because they just didn't work for us and that's it. We don't have to define our whole lives around those decisions. We don't have to do a deep moral inventory or make amends to everybody that we ever hurt. Not that those bad things to do but they don't have to be connected to whether we eat or not because -- see that's another thing the pig says is, "Well, you're going to keep eating until you finish your moral inventory."

Barbara: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah, you understand.



Barbara: I do, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: How confident are you that you are never going to have sugar between now and the day that you die?

Barbara: Let's see, 55 percent. I'm coming up.

Dr. Glenn: So what's the pig saying now?

Barbara: The pig is saying -- well there's something about defining myself as normal that moves the dial, the reframing into healthy appetite run amok for a few periods in my life. It increases my confidence. The pig, let's see, what would the pig say to that? It's the skeptical pig. Sounds good but you know yourself. You know all the number of times you've had these good ideas and what is it that I'm going to do.

Dr. Glenn: As if continuing to get up and try when you fall down is a sign of weakness as opposed to strength.

Barbara: True and there have been times in my life where I just said, quit trying because you're just stirring up the pig I guess, stirring up all these feelings of failures, so just live your life and ignore the fact that you're not happy about how you're living your life.

Dr. Glenn: Well, the pig says that if you feed it enough, it will leave you alone. That's what the pig is saying there. It's too bad that you're not normal and you have to suffer in this way but you'll just have to feed me enough and have this level of suffering but that I won't torture you even more. I'll only torture you a little bit.

Barbara: That's very true. Yes, the pig wins.

Dr. Glenn: It doesn't have to. It doesn't have to be like that.

Barbara: I get that with my head for sure.



Dr. Glenn: Yeah. And that's another thing that the pig will be saying is that you have to feel this a hundred percent in your heart or it's not going to work.

Barbara: True.

Dr. Glenn: As if you don't have the ability to make a decision. Our uniquely human capacity -- animals don't really have this capability but humans do, we can step back from our emotions on our impulses and we can make an intellectual evaluation and

decision about what's best for our life and hold to that decision. And if we couldn't that, then society wouldn't be possible. People would be running up and kissing strangers all the time or they would be robbing banks or they'd be running red lights. If we didn't have that ability to control our impulse for gratification, then society wouldn't work at all.

Barbara: Right.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. And so it's just blatantly obvious out there in front of our faces all the time but because some of these things are so pleasurable, the pig confuses us about it. This is just one more thing where you can make an intellectual decision in spite of how you feel, in spite of when you're in doubt, in spite of emotional discomfort, in spite of the fact that you might feel lonely or unhappy or depressed. I mean you might.

There might be days when you feel lonely and unhappy and depressed and you would really want to get sugar and that distracts you for a while. I don't like the word numbing because I think there's a high that's associated with sugar that's not captured by the word numbing. It distracts you and you're not going to have that anymore, so you'll have life on life's terms. That's a place that OA was right.

But so what? You're perfectly capable of dealing with life on life terms without having to put a whole society around you and dedicate three or four nights a week and call yourself a compulsive overeater and say that you're powerless and kind of



develop all these crazy rituals that take over your life. I mean if you like all that, that's great, that's fine but you don't have to do all that. And so what happens is that at this point, if you want to do this, it becomes necessary to take a leap of faith. It becomes necessary to say, intellectually I've decided that I'm going to assign all of that doubt to my pig. It might not feel like I've got a hundred percent confidence. I might have all these thoughts running around in my head that say I am going to break this and yeah, this never binge thing, that thing is good, but you know, my pig really knows what's right.

You make a decision to assign all of that to the pig and then you just listen and ignore the pig. What do you think about that?

Barbara: In other words, I would be a hundred percent committed and then whatever doubt might arise, I don't see that as -- it doesn't take away from my hundred percent commitment. I put that onto the pig.

Dr. Glenn: Yes.

Barbara: But not me part, okay.

Dr. Glenn: Yes. It's just a thinking strategy that helps you distance yourself from those impulses. Barbara, we have just a couple of more minutes. Is there anything else that you want to ask me about this or concerns that you have or serious pig squeal that you're hearing in your head that you're worried about?

Barbara: I'm thinking. As I put this on my food plan, this would be around it. I put it under the never column.

Dr. Glenn: Yup.

Barbara: To start with this one thing and observe and the pig squeal. It's that kind of a first step.



Dr. Glenn: It's that simple. Five words, I will never eat sugar again, five words.

Barbara: Okay. Kind of a mantra you stay with, huh?

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. Because then any other voice in your head that says anything to the contrary is the pig.

Barbara: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: Would you be willing to work with this for a few weeks and then email me and let me know how you're doing and we'll make another session?

Barbara: I would. I'd be delighted to, yup!

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