



**Glenn Livingston, Ph.D.
And Jessica Hazewinkel
Forgive Yourself Immediately**

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Dr. Glenn: Well, I just wanted to talk to you for a couple of minutes to understand after people have gotten through the point where they're not really bingeing anymore, they really get the basics of the system, maybe they make a mistake once in a while, what tends to be left are the psychological thoughts and feelings associated with the presence of mind and maybe sometimes some of the old self-deprecating things. I wanted to just hear from you a little bit about what that struggle has been like for you? What's gotten better? What still remains? Is there anything I can help with? I'm just curious what it's been like for you.

Jessica: I think I have done most is because as being a Never Binge Again coach, I had one with you and so many other coaching session to this other coach, that every time that there was coming up even a little thing, it was immediately addressed because I just had the possibility to address it immediately to someone. I was mostly okay with my



eating and at the beginning, I had some occasional temptations to binge on food that I cannot get here in Italy, but it was some exceptional one-time occasion. Then I overcame that thinking that it was ridiculous because it's not some one-time occasion. It was especially when I was traveling on airport or something and then I realize I can go always [inaudible 00:01:21] worst with my life. It was stupid to say, "Okay, I have to binge now because I can never eat it again."

Then I had some binging on healthy stuff. I lost my taste for sweet candies because I had now learned that binging on that give me not a very good feeling immediately after. But I still didn't have learned how to manage my stress or the reasons why I try to binge, so for emotional reasons or for stress or that was mostly the thing, and so I binged on healthy food. Now, was that okay for my weight because you can binge a lot on carrots without putting on any weight?

Dr. Glenn: Yeah.

Jessica: But it was not so good for me first to learn to manage my stress because I was still losing time eating. And second, as a coach that's helping people to manage to lose their weight, I would like to be a role model and not someone that is binging the same. It's very hard to help others to overcome their binging when you're still binging yourself. It's not that I'm saying to my clients, "Oh, binge on healthy food." It's not saying, "Oh, you don't have to binge." So I decided that even for that, I had just to apply the same rules as for binging on sweet stuff or bakery stuff or that kind of ice creams; that was a sweet spot for me.

Dr. Glenn: And what was the result of doing that?



Jessica: That I changed some of the rules; that I learned that it's okay to feel stressful. It's like the same kind of thing about learning that you can be hungry and you don't have to do anything about it immediately, it's just part of life. I had to learn, okay, feeling sometimes stressful or emotions, or sad, that's okay. It's not that you have to run for it and to eat it away somehow. And instead it's better to use other coping mechanisms to deal with that; more positive, more solution-oriented.

Dr. Glenn: And that worked for you?

Jessica: Yeah, that worked for me.

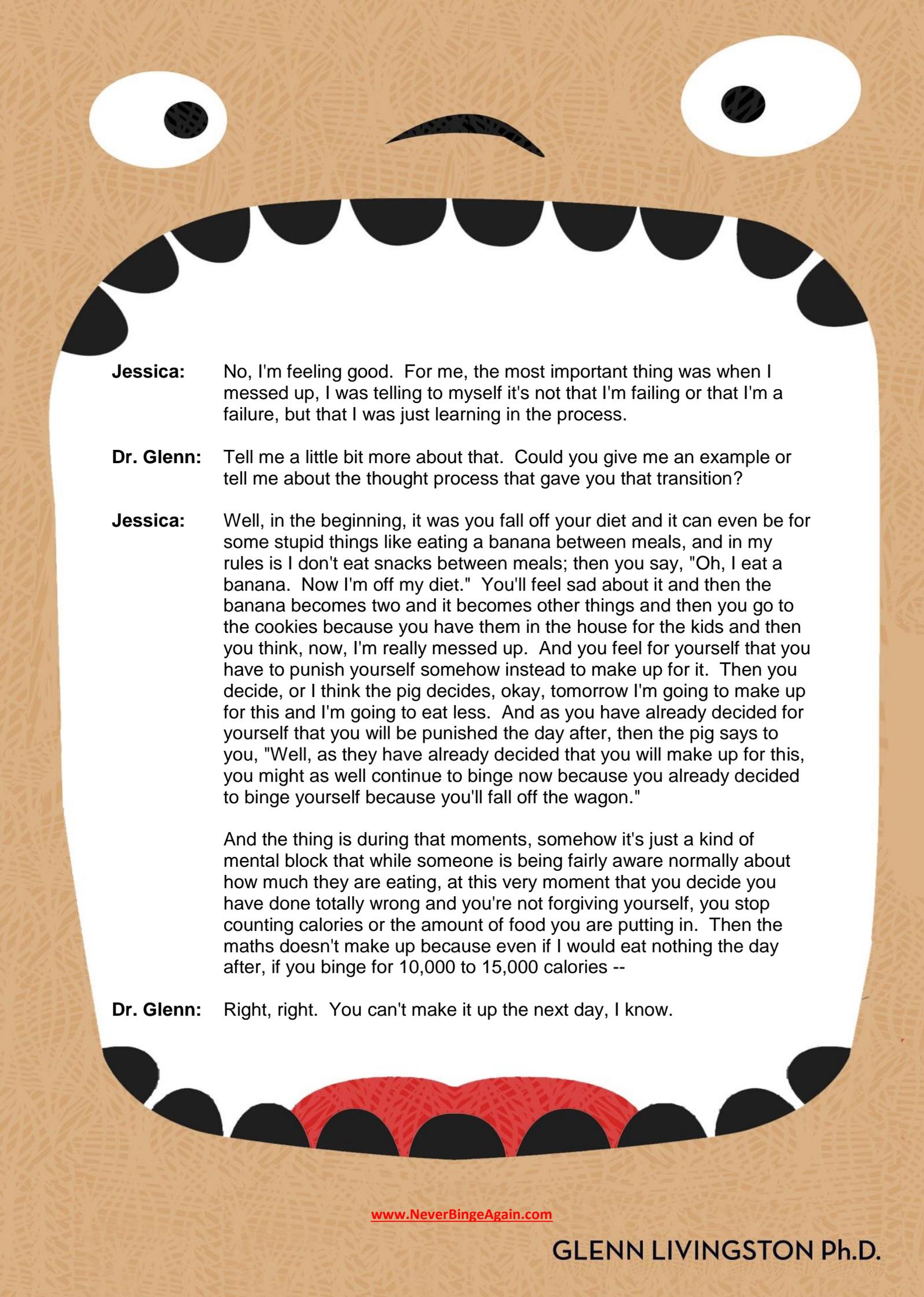
Dr. Glenn: And so, what's remaining? Is there anything remaining that's troubling you or making it hard for you to choose to forgive yourself if you make a mistake?

Jessica: No. At this very moment, not. Sometimes where I could binge for -- at the certain moments, I had some physical pain for problems, then stupidly, I became to binge for that reason. And then I saw that it's better to take just some pain medication instead of trying to use food.

Dr. Glenn: It sounds like periodically, your pig finds another little excuse. That's the pig's job, right?

Jessica: The pig comes out when I have some situation that I didn't feel before because most things are now a habit and sometimes they can come out something I don't expect, then the pig squeals are louder.

Dr. Glenn: Do you have any questions or concerns about all this?



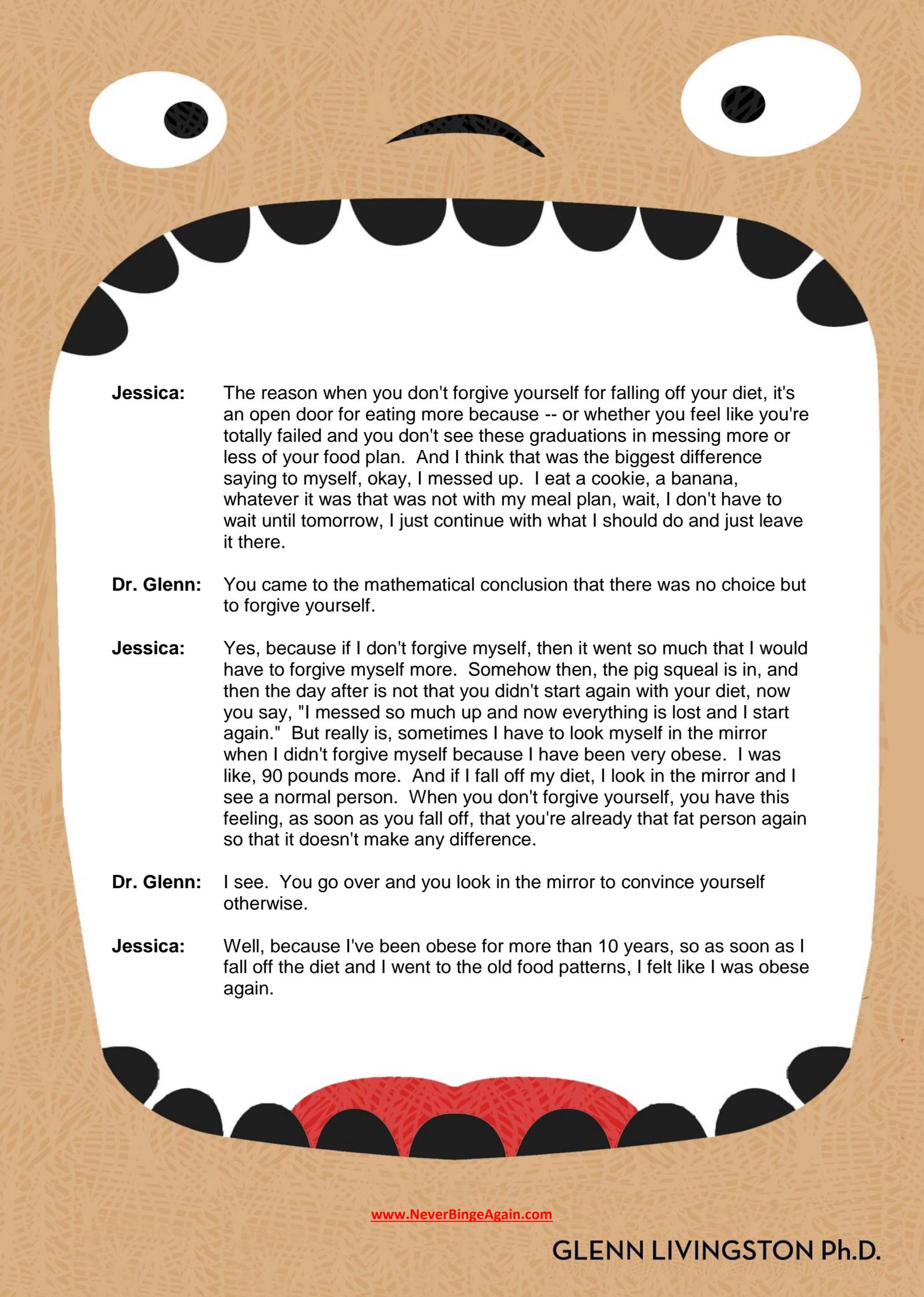
Jessica: No, I'm feeling good. For me, the most important thing was when I messed up, I was telling to myself it's not that I'm failing or that I'm a failure, but that I was just learning in the process.

Dr. Glenn: Tell me a little bit more about that. Could you give me an example or tell me about the thought process that gave you that transition?

Jessica: Well, in the beginning, it was you fall off your diet and it can even be for some stupid things like eating a banana between meals, and in my rules is I don't eat snacks between meals; then you say, "Oh, I eat a banana. Now I'm off my diet." You'll feel sad about it and then the banana becomes two and it becomes other things and then you go to the cookies because you have them in the house for the kids and then you think, now, I'm really messed up. And you feel for yourself that you have to punish yourself somehow instead to make up for it. Then you decide, or I think the pig decides, okay, tomorrow I'm going to make up for this and I'm going to eat less. And as you have already decided for yourself that you will be punished the day after, then the pig says to you, "Well, as they have already decided that you will make up for this, you might as well continue to binge now because you already decided to binge yourself because you'll fall off the wagon."

And the thing is during that moments, somehow it's just a kind of mental block that while someone is being fairly aware normally about how much they are eating, at this very moment that you decide you have done totally wrong and you're not forgiving yourself, you stop counting calories or the amount of food you are putting in. Then the maths doesn't make up because even if I would eat nothing the day after, if you binge for 10,000 to 15,000 calories --

Dr. Glenn: Right, right. You can't make it up the next day, I know.



Jessica: The reason when you don't forgive yourself for falling off your diet, it's an open door for eating more because -- or whether you feel like you're totally failed and you don't see these graduations in messing more or less of your food plan. And I think that was the biggest difference saying to myself, okay, I messed up. I eat a cookie, a banana, whatever it was that was not with my meal plan, wait, I don't have to wait until tomorrow, I just continue with what I should do and just leave it there.

Dr. Glenn: You came to the mathematical conclusion that there was no choice but to forgive yourself.

Jessica: Yes, because if I don't forgive myself, then it went so much that I would have to forgive myself more. Somehow then, the pig squeal is in, and then the day after is not that you didn't start again with your diet, now you say, "I messed so much up and now everything is lost and I start again." But really is, sometimes I have to look myself in the mirror when I didn't forgive myself because I have been very obese. I was like, 90 pounds more. And if I fall off my diet, I look in the mirror and I see a normal person. When you don't forgive yourself, you have this feeling, as soon as you fall off, that you're already that fat person again so that it doesn't make any difference.

Dr. Glenn: I see. You go over and you look in the mirror to convince yourself otherwise.

Jessica: Well, because I've been obese for more than 10 years, so as soon as I fall off the diet and I went to the old food patterns, I felt like I was obese again.



Dr. Glenn: But if you go look in the mirror, do you see an obese person or do you see the reality that you're thin?

Jessica: No that I see a normal person that's wearing clothes that she wears like 20 years before and it's just normal size. But I know if I keep bingeing, I will return at obesity I left past me.

Dr. Glenn: The numbers convince you that you had to forgive you, does the mirror convince you that you have to forgive yourself too?

Jessica: Not initially. Initially, I was more focusing on, oh, I see my belly a little bit more rounder or whatever it was, and then I have just to think about not with the moment I have one more size clothes. I have saved one of my obesity clothes that is really, really large. Now, it's like falling off if I try to put it on. And if I see that one, I said, "Wow, it was really a big difference." You'll get used to it if you turn your normal size. It was funny that at last, I was working on photos for my websites and my son looked at it, my son, and he said, "Mom, I didn't remember you was that fat." And I said, "Me neither." You have to forgive yourself or otherwise you think everything is lost, and if everything is lost, nothing matters and then your pig say you might as well binge and that will make you feel better.

Dr. Glenn: At least there is pig slop. At least there's slop, that's what the pig says. Everything is lost, but there is this one good thing.

Jessica: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: Jessica, that's great. That's really helpful. Are there any other tips you'd give people to help them forgive themselves?



Jessica: Yes. To forgive yourself immediately, not wait the day after. What I have learned is that sometimes, you can put yourself there and you're going to binge or to eat more. Why are you doing that? You might have some thoughts that, okay, this is not what I want or you get the feeling, "This is not tasting that good." And you can stop right at that moment if you forgive yourself with what you're doing and you're not listening to the pig that said, "Okay, you have already screwed up, it makes no difference, do it tomorrow." And the powerful feeling that comes to me one time, I don't remember it was, I think it was some chocolate cake or something already on my fork and halfway I was putting it down and that was making me feeling so proud of myself that I forgot to blame myself and I forgive myself immediately, and all the [inaudible 00:10:02].

Dr. Glenn: That's fabulous. I remember having bought several chocolate bars and getting into the car and starting to unwrap them and being unable to pick them up to my mouth 'cause I had the thought that I don't want this, my pig does and I don't need pig slop and I don't want farm animals tell me what to do. And all of a sudden, I really wanted to put them in my mouth still even though I had that thought and all of a sudden, I couldn't. And at that point, I realized I was becoming a different person and I forgave myself and it just became easier and easier from there, and I always remember that one moment in time.

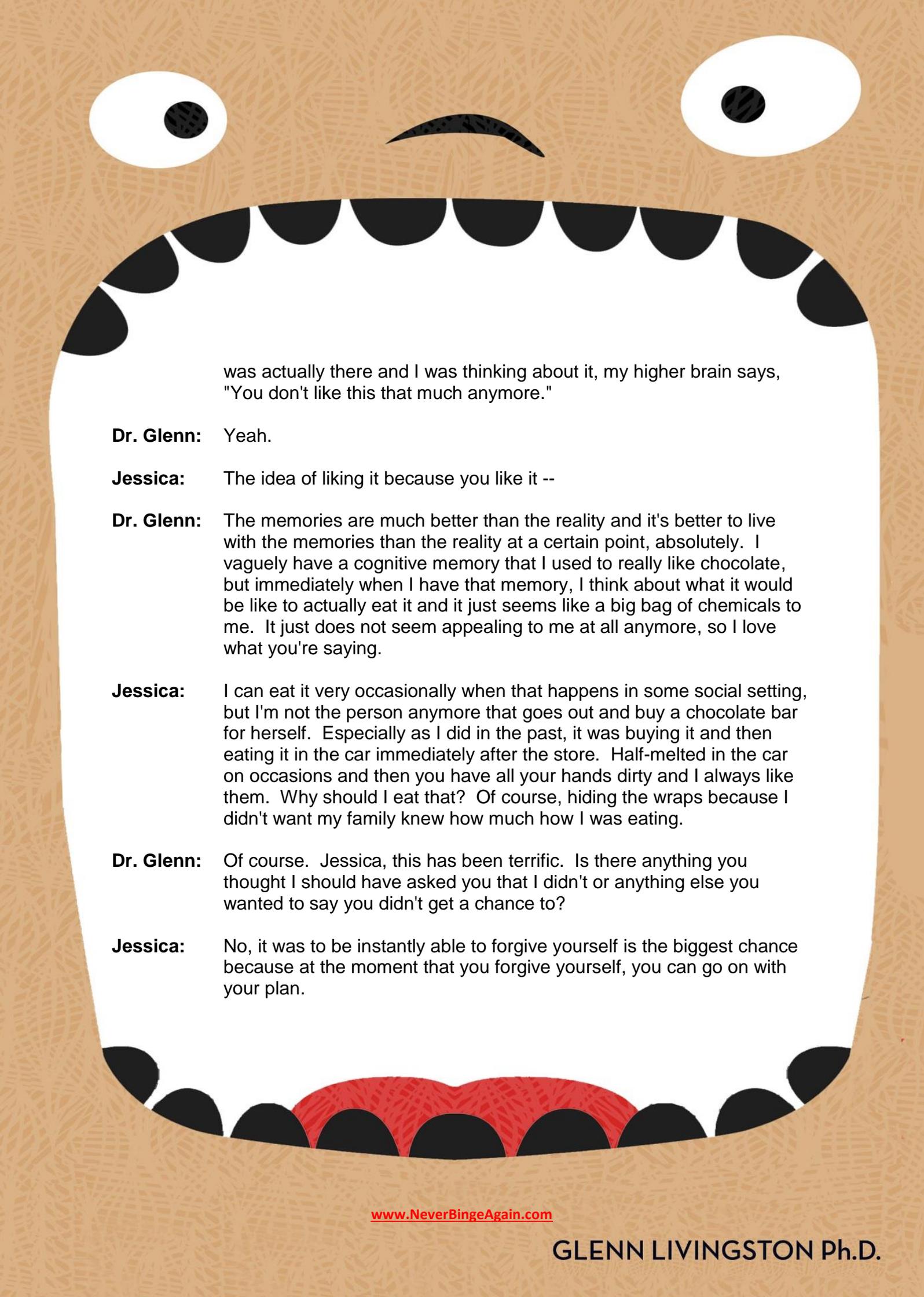
Jessica: I had a similar moment, but it was a little bit different. I had lost my weight and one day say, "Okay, you can treat yourself," and I go buy some chocolate bar. So I went to the grocery store. I went to the aisle where all the chocolates and candy stuff are. And instead of what I did before, I was just buying everything that was a little bit appealing for me and it's making a big thing and then taking it home and eat everything and trying to see what's better and not eating too much. I



was thinking, okay, I'm going to buy one. And I was there and I looked at all the chocolates and at first, I thought, that's good, that's good, that's good. Hmm, I couldn't choose and I went home without any chocolate because I was looking and I said, "Really, this is not what I want." But I remember staying there because I always keep that session in grocery stores when I stop bingeing. And I was looking there with the idea I'm going to buy a chocolate bar and I was looking at all the kind of different chocolate bars and I end up buying nothing.

Dr. Glenn: So, here's what they have in common. What you're saying is you reached a moment where the paralysis of the obsession drove you crazy. Which one should I have and is this one better for me or worse for me? Am I going to draw this more for better? And how much I'm going to have to make up for it? And how many of them am I going to have and when I'm going to have them? All of that energy and all of the back and forth between your lizard brain and your higher brain just drives you crazy. And the insight of that moment is it's just not worth it. I won't go to that section anymore. I won't bother buying a chocolate bar anymore because I'm going to get to the car and I'm going to start obsessing about should I or shouldn't I? And I know my pig wants this and I don't, but should I do it anyway? And it's just not worth it. I don't want to put myself through that mental torture, leave the damn chocolate bar in the store.

Jessica: It sounds very strange, but actually, I was thinking it was like now, the weather is hot and I think, okay, have the chocolate bar all melted in my car with the kind of paper that's getting there onto, oh, I don't want this. I want to make it a great plate of pasta with some vegetables. I live in Italy, so we eat pasta a lot in Italian way with lots of vegetables used and I thought I like that. I don't want the half-melted chocolate bar. I went in the store with the memory of that I liked it, and when I



was actually there and I was thinking about it, my higher brain says, "You don't like this that much anymore."

Dr. Glenn: Yeah.

Jessica: The idea of liking it because you like it --

Dr. Glenn: The memories are much better than the reality and it's better to live with the memories than the reality at a certain point, absolutely. I vaguely have a cognitive memory that I used to really like chocolate, but immediately when I have that memory, I think about what it would be like to actually eat it and it just seems like a big bag of chemicals to me. It just does not seem appealing to me at all anymore, so I love what you're saying.

Jessica: I can eat it very occasionally when that happens in some social setting, but I'm not the person anymore that goes out and buy a chocolate bar for herself. Especially as I did in the past, it was buying it and then eating it in the car immediately after the store. Half-melted in the car on occasions and then you have all your hands dirty and I always like them. Why should I eat that? Of course, hiding the wraps because I didn't want my family knew how much how I was eating.

Dr. Glenn: Of course. Jessica, this has been terrific. Is there anything you thought I should have asked you that I didn't or anything else you wanted to say you didn't get a chance to?

Jessica: No, it was to be instantly able to forgive yourself is the biggest chance because at the moment that you forgive yourself, you can go on with your plan.



Dr. Glenn: Yes.

Jessica: And as long as you don't forgive yourself, you still remain that person that say everything is lost and the pig says, "We might as well just binge and bingeing is the only thing that makes you feel good enough until we get to tomorrow." And you get that self-punishment that's setting you out for a new binge because I have been years on cycles of bingeing and then eating nothing and then bingeing and then eating nothing.

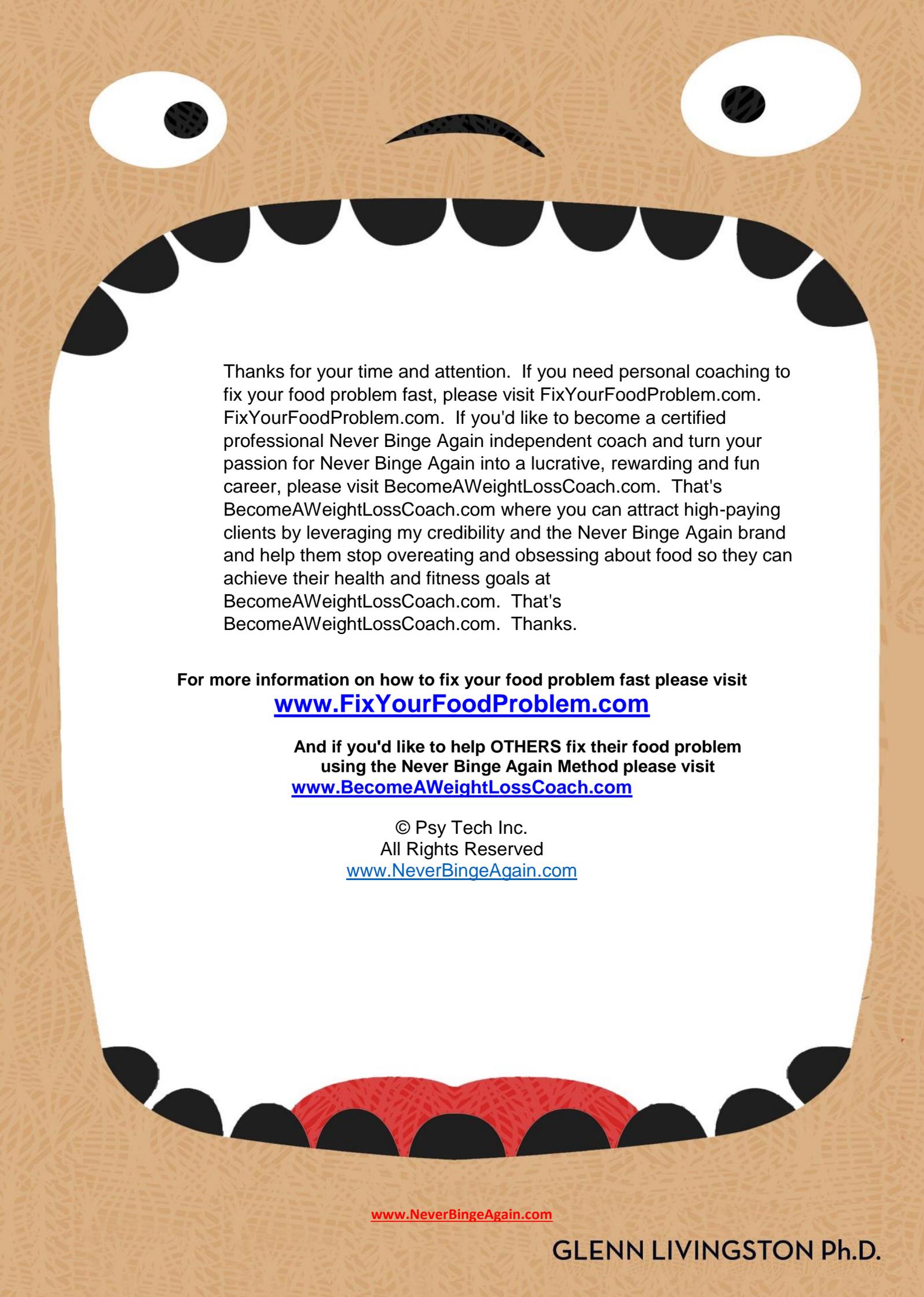
Dr. Glenn: If you won't forgive yourself, then you're lost. You have to understand that it's your pig that won't forgive you, you forgive yourself completely. There had been times when I made a mistake that I actually had to go back to my journal and write down that I forgive myself totally and completely for the mistakes that I made. I felt a lifting of the obsession when I did that.

Jessica: I like to tell other people to help them, these obsessions, you can overcome them and you can become really another person. I have been in that place. In these moments, you cannot imagine that. You really cannot imagine that you won't crave that food any more. It happens.

Dr. Glenn: It absolutely does. Jessica, this is terrific. How much weight did you lose by the way?

Jessica: 90 pounds.

Dr. Glenn: You lost 90 pounds, okay. So, you are a whole different person. Well, thank you very much, dear.



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