



How to Stop Breaking Your Food Rules Every Few Days

Glenn Livingston, Ph.D. And Sarai

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Dr. Glenn: Hey, this is Glenn Livingston, and I am here with Sarai, a nice lady who's agreed to let me record her coaching session to help you all experience and benefit from her wisdom and struggles and observations, and strengths. Sarai, how are you today?

Sarai: Doing okay.

Dr. Glenn: Good. Well, catch me up. Tell me a little bit about your Never Binge Again story. What is it that you struggle with? How can I help?

Sarai: I struggle with getting my rules down and sticking to them. Like, I'll be fine for so many days and then I will have issues. And those issues take me like two or three weeks of fighting, and then I'll be fine for a couple weeks, and then I'll go back to the struggle.

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GLENN LIVINGSTON Ph.D.



Dr. Glenn: Do you have a lot of rules? Do you have one or two rules that you're trying to stick with? What's the structure of your food plan?

Sarai: I try to start out with like these two; to never eat after a certain time and no sugar after 8:00 p.m.

Dr. Glenn: And you never eat sugar?

Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: And how do you define sugar?

Sarai: Just straight up processed sweets, candy, cakes, doughnuts, those type of sugar. Not like apples and bananas, but like processed sugar.

Dr. Glenn: One of the things that we find is that it's better to define sugar inclusively rather than exclusively. So rather than saying, I don't eat processed sugar, we'd say, the only sweet taste that I allow in my diet are X, Y, and Z. Or I mean, you could have seven of them, but like for me, it's whole fruit and berries.

Sarai: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Glenn: So maybe you can give some thought to that and just find some clarity with it because otherwise the pig tends to sneak some stuff in eventually. Does that make sense?

Sarai: Yes, that's what it does, sneaks on one or two things here, one or two things there, and then the next thing you know, you're full out bingeing.



Dr. Glenn: Yeah. So clarity and focus is an antidote to that. At least it prevents you from accidentally letting the pig out. So tell me what happens. So you go good for five or six -- talk me through the last thing that got you to break your rules.

Sarai: I had a neck surgery in the middle of last week, and being stuck on my couch and recovering made it really easy to break those rules, sleeping during the day and then being hungry at night or just bored, so boredom. That's usually what gets me is the boredom.

Dr. Glenn: What do you want to do about all this? Do you want to try to stick to these rules?

Sarai: Any rules, I would actually fix it because I have been struggling with those for 20 plus years. I'm 31 and I've been struggling my whole life.

Dr. Glenn: Most people have by the time they come to Never Binge Again, that's a very common story. The pig will usually say, well, this has been a lifetime problem so it's always going to be a lifetime problem. You have to watch out for getting stuck in that because that will pull you down. People can and do change at any time, just so you know that. What rules do you want to stick with? If you're actually can do it, do you think this is too strict?

Sarai: I don't know if it's too strict or not strict, I don't know. I don't know which one might be for me because like, for me, I'm better if I have structure. Does that make sense?

Dr. Glenn: Yeah.



Sarai: If I have a way to be lazy or be laid back, I just kind of snowball because I don't have a reason to get up and get dressed to leave the house, then after three or four days, it's turned into like not wanting to shower and then -- I know that sounds pretty bad, but not having a structure getting up and doing something.

Dr. Glenn: The rule that might not be strict enough will be the one about sugar, is that true?

Sarai: Probably.

Dr. Glenn: How would you make it stricter?

Sarai: I might take out like flour and maybe add a rule about having sit down meals and only eating if I'm sat down, or eating so many times a day instead of snacking. Snacking always leads to eating more and more and not stopping.

Dr. Glenn: So you wouldn't have any flour, you wouldn't eat standing up, and you wouldn't eat between meals?

Sarai: Yup.

Dr. Glenn: And what are the sweet tastes that you allow in your diet?

Sarai: I like fruits and berries, and then protein shake here and there because I run a lot, so extra protein because sometimes eating meat is not always feasible, just for the sitting down actually getting to it kind of thing.



Dr. Glenn: Are there any other sweet taste you'd like to have in your diet besides fruit, berries and whatever sweetener that you have on your protein shakes?

Sarai: Not really, actually. Because if I eat just a little of ice cream, it snowballs, then I end up eating like few pints or a half-gallon. And the next thing you know, goes on to whatever cookies you can find to go with it or chocolate syrup. And I think it's probably safer to stay away from them, if you know what I mean.

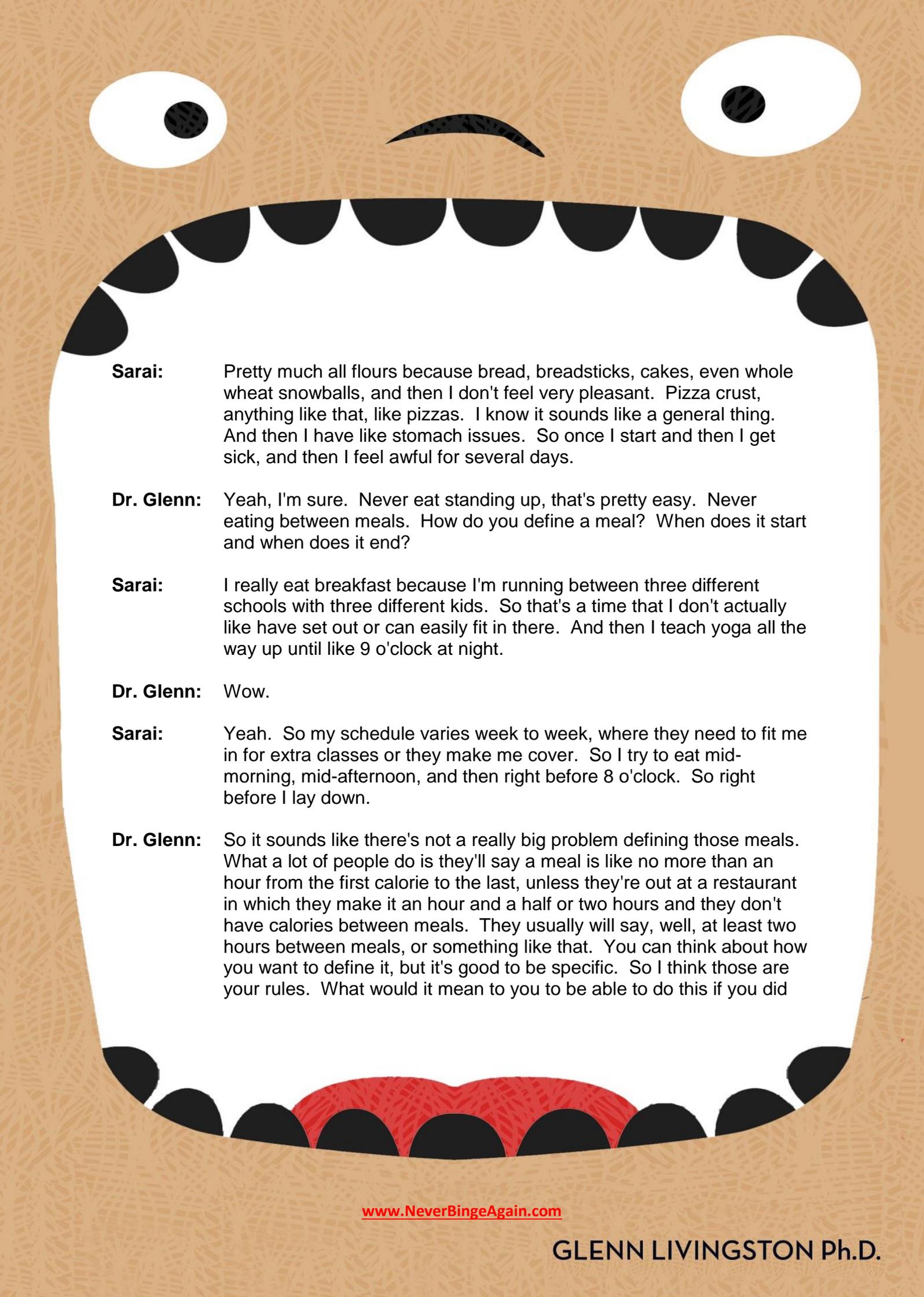
Dr. Glenn: Yeah. So the only sweet taste you'll ever have again are whole fruit, berries and protein shakes?

Sarai: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Glenn: By the way, we present these rules to our pigs as if they're set in stone, as if they're forever, in the same way that we tell a little two-year-old that they can never cross the street without us.

Sarai: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Glenn: But we know when that two-year-old gets older, we're going to teach her to look both ways. So this can evolve over time. You can change it if you want to, but you're going to present it to your pig as if it's set in stone. We can't allow the pig the luxury of distraction thinking that it might be possible, just like you don't let a two-year-old get distracted with crossing the street. And when you say you don't want to have any more flour, is that all flours? Are there certain flours that are okay?



Sarai: Pretty much all flours because bread, breadsticks, cakes, even whole wheat snowballs, and then I don't feel very pleasant. Pizza crust, anything like that, like pizzas. I know it sounds like a general thing. And then I have like stomach issues. So once I start and then I get sick, and then I feel awful for several days.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah, I'm sure. Never eat standing up, that's pretty easy. Never eating between meals. How do you define a meal? When does it start and when does it end?

Sarai: I really eat breakfast because I'm running between three different schools with three different kids. So that's a time that I don't actually like have set out or can easily fit in there. And then I teach yoga all the way up until like 9 o'clock at night.

Dr. Glenn: Wow.

Sarai: Yeah. So my schedule varies week to week, where they need to fit me in for extra classes or they make me cover. So I try to eat mid-morning, mid-afternoon, and then right before 8 o'clock. So right before I lay down.

Dr. Glenn: So it sounds like there's not a really big problem defining those meals. What a lot of people do is they'll say a meal is like no more than an hour from the first calorie to the last, unless they're out at a restaurant in which they make it an hour and a half or two hours and they don't have calories between meals. They usually will say, well, at least two hours between meals, or something like that. You can think about how you want to define it, but it's good to be specific. So I think those are your rules. What would it mean to you to be able to do this if you did



have something that could stick and now the pig says, it never had, so it never will. But if you could do it, what would it mean to you?

Sarai: A lot. I had severe bulimia for several years, and then I finally gained weight back. From about two years ago, I started gaining weight back, but now I've kind of gained past to the point where I was when I got the bulimia or like emerged to the point I was like, bad. Now I'm trying to slowly take it off without causing any over restriction.

Dr. Glenn: So that's a good point, is this food plan, is it over restricted in any way if you're not having sugar and flour and not eating between meals, are you going to have substantial enough meals enough to eat?

Sarai: I think I'd be fine because that's kind of where myself enough to know. Is there like a way I could add to my food plan, like don't eat anything other than what's planned? Because I usually try to sit down and plan out what I'm going to eat the next day, so I know what I'm eating and how many calories I'm going to be taking in, reference to make sure I'm eating enough or not getting into the trap of cut more calories, to cut my weight kind of things that I had gotten into before. I try to plan out what I'm going to eat the next day and keep it about 1500 calories.

Dr. Glenn: That works for a lot of people. Some people even they'll tally what they're going to eat in something like CRON-O-Meter or MyFitnessPal to make sure it's nutritionally complete. You can do that. Some people find that burdensome and they have trouble sticking with what they planned, then the pig will say, well, you took one bite off it, so you might as well just recall the other rules. That's what you have to watch out whether it's too burdensome a rule, but I work with a lot of people that do that and they do fine.



Sarai: Yeah, because I got down to 79 pounds. Five years ago, I was down to 79 pounds.

Dr. Glenn: That's dangerous, yeah. You need to be sure you're having enough calories and nutrition. That sounds important.

Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: By the way, I'm legally not supposed to provide treatment, yeah. So this is a coaching session, it's an education, but I think you know that and you can talk to a professional in your area, but it also sounds like you know what you're doing.

Sarai: I have talked to a few professionals, but they never seem to help me break it., so --

Dr. Glenn: Okay, let's see what we can do. Let's say you had this under control and you stuck to these rules for a year, what would change in your life?

Sarai: The amount of money spent on just crap food that could be spent on taking my kids to, I don't know. We live close the Sea World. We live close to Six Flags. Or just traveling in general, or just even taking them bowling more because the more money you spent on junk food, the less money there is.

Dr. Glenn: Mm-hmm. So you could stop wasting so much money in junk food and travel and do fine stuff with the kids.

Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: How much money would that be, do you think?



Sarai: I don't know. Usually, I don't keep in the house. So once I start breaking a rule, that's a trip to the grocery store and buy junk, then maybe another trip back later to buy more junk because I've already ate junk. So I don't know, 40, 50 bucks each time.

Dr. Glenn: Is that like once a week, or?

Sarai: Yeah, once a week or once every two weeks.

Dr. Glenn: So maybe like \$1,500 a year, is that fair?

Sarai: Yup, thereabout.

Dr. Glenn: What else would be better in a year if you manage to stay with this?

Sarai: My weight, and I have so many neck surgeries.

Dr. Glenn: You would need to have another neck surgery if you lost weight?

Sarai: Yup. Right now, I'm at 130, 140, thereabout. I have bone spurs coming off of my neck on the outside and the extra weight is causing them to pull off the vertebrae, so they wanted me to lose weight.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. That sounds important.

Sarai: It's gotten to the point that it is important for me to lose and control. Not just lose, control it.

Dr. Glenn: So it would be less physical pain?



Sarai: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: And how much weight would you lose?

Sarai: I'm only five foot, so they want me to get down to about 110, 115, so 15, 20 pounds.

Dr. Glenn: And what else would be different?

Sarai: It wouldn't hurt. I have to play with my kids more. In general, not hurt, being more active. Those are the big ones; the money and being more active.

Dr. Glenn: What kind of stuff would you play with the kids?

Sarai: Basketball. I've got one kid in basketball, one kid's a gymnast, and the other one is just trying to figure out. He's only five, so he's learning everything. He wants to do everything.

Dr. Glenn: Sarai, what happens if you don't do this? What happens if you just keep doing what you've been doing in a year?

Sarai: Nothing changes. It can get worse.

Dr. Glenn: How much worse?

Sarai: I come from a very obese family, so potential could be obese and sick. Potential there to get diabetes, everything.

Dr. Glenn: I know it's uncomfortable to talk about, but one of the things that the pig does to keep us repeating patterns is to hide the future from us, both



the positive and negative future. Talk a little bit more about what you anticipate could happen if you don't change?

Sarai: I can gain more weight and have to have a neck fusion, which means months away from doing anything with my kids where I can't be able to take care of them, plus just the pain, not being able to teach. Those are the big ones.

Dr. Glenn: So you can get diabetes, you could have more neck pain and not be able to care for the kids and you could lose the ability to teach yoga?

Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: What would happen to your emotional state if that happened?

Sarai: Yoga is my outlet, so yeah, that wouldn't be very pleasant. Depression, you know, that's probably about it.

Dr. Glenn: So what should we do? Do you want to commit to these rules?

Sarai: Stick to the plan. Put a plan down and find a way to stick to it.

Dr. Glenn: Is that what you want to do?

Sarai: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: But why don't we give your pig a chance then, okay? Can I ask your pig what are all the reasons that Sarai can't, shouldn't, or won't stick to this plan? I already know one because you never had before, but what else?



Sarai: Sarai have changed. At least now I know a cycle; Start losing weight, start feeling better, and then I go through a binge episode, and then back to starting all over. I honestly think my pig likes to start over every single time for some reason. Those are the big ones.

Dr. Glenn: Anything else?

Sarai: Yeah, I really do think, you know, like to start over.

Dr. Glenn: Can I ask you something difficult? I want you to jump back up into your higher self. We're going to go over those two squeals and I want you to tell me where the lie is in those squeals because the pig is always lying on some level. So when the pig says you never have before, so you never will again, where is the lie on that?

Sarai: I have done it before. I did it for -- I can do it for a month, and then it just shows back up. So as long as I stay strong, it doesn't know the future, it only knows what is done.

Dr. Glenn: If you did it for one month, you could do it for two months, right?

Sarai: Mm-hmm.

Dr. Glenn: Cross the wall and stay in the other side of the wall. If you did it for whole month, you proved your ability. And you're right, the pig doesn't have a time machine. It doesn't know the future. All you have to do is never binge now. The other answers to that squeal are that, no matter how long you've driven on a highway, if you went a thousand miles in one highway, that has no impact on your ability to take the next exit. Just 'cause you didn't take any exit for the thousand miles, doesn't mean you can't take the next one. That's true, right?



Sarai: Yes, that is true.

Dr. Glenn: Where is the lie in the pig's idea that you're too frightened to change, you're too stuck in this cycle, and you have to stick with it because the pig really likes it starting over all the time? Where is the lie in that?

Sarai: Starting over sucks. Starting over the first several days sucks. I just think it wants to start over, and then it gets the chance to binge. That's all it really is, right?

Dr. Glenn: That's all it is. It confuses you into thinking that you should start over. I'm altering the language a little bit. I just want you to see the merging between you and the pig at that time. Well, how confident are you that you're not going to binge again, never?

Sarai: I'm to say I'm not going to the binge for at least today and tomorrow. I know that I'm pretty confident I can make it this time. 80 percent confident that I can at least make it a month.

Dr. Glenn: What about forever?

Sarai: I really think I can.

Dr. Glenn: Are you sure?

Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: I think your pig is still bothering you. I just have the impression your pig is still bothering you. Am I wrong?



Sarai: Not exactly worried about right now. I'm worried about when I get back down to say like, the 90 pounds and the 110 pounds. Back down to the smaller sizes that it's not going to fit here and there. That's where I worry.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. So the pig says, you're fine as long as you're uncomfortably heavy, but when you get to goal weight, then the squeal about, well, a little is not going to hurt; that's going to be too appealing and it's going to get you then.

Sarai: Yeah, that's where I worry.

Dr. Glenn: Can you find the lie in that?

Sarai: Because I was actually more comfortable when I was smaller and I didn't binge and I didn't eat like crazy, I'm actually healthy. And for once, the pig was correct for two plus years, so I know that's a lie.

Dr. Glenn: What did you do for those two years? How did you maintain it for those two years?

Sarai: I don't know. I just tell myself I had rules and stuck them, pretty much like a Paleo diet and I stuck to it.

Dr. Glenn: For a lot more than a month?

Sarai: Yup. I was really busy. We are moving cross-country, then moved back cross-country. Really didn't have much of an option.

Dr. Glenn: You know your pig wouldn't let me know that before, right? That your pig wanted to be sure that we thought it was only a month?



Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: How confident are you that you're never going to binge again?

Sarai: Pretty confident.

Dr. Glenn: If I pushed you for a number? Sorry to be so obnoxious. I'm kind of attacking your pig.

Sarai: No, you're fine. Closer to a hundred now, like 90, 95.

Dr. Glenn: Is there a specific squeal that you're hearing that's maintaining that five or 10 percent?

Sarai: I think it's more the whole. It never happened before. I never stuck before, why is it going to stick now?

Dr. Glenn: Didn't it stick for two years before?

Sarai: Two years, but then it went downhill, I know.

Dr. Glenn: So you made a mistake before so you're going to have to make a mistake again?

Sarai: Yup.

Dr. Glenn: So the pig says, I got you for two years, so I'm going to get you eventually. Maybe it's going to be five years this time, but I'll get you eventually



Sarai: Yup.

Dr. Glenn: Where is the lie in the pig saying that it has to get you eventually?

Sarai: Because it doesn't have to. It's all in my control.

Dr. Glenn: Because if you don't binge today, it's always going to be today, right? You can stretch today out into forever if you want to.

Sarai: Yup.

Dr. Glenn: The problem with leaving that 5 or 10 percent of uncertainty is then the pig thinks that it only has to try 10 or 20 times. 20 years try, it's going to get it. It's kind of like when one of your kid says, "Mommy, can I have this? How about now? Can I? Can I? Can I?" Right?

Sarai: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: Eventually, like, "All right already," right?

Sarai: You just give it.

Dr. Glenn: They have to know that no means no. They have to know that or they're just going to keep going. That's why we call it a leap of faith. That's why we make a declaration of confidence at a hundred percent. Even though we don't feel it, the pig is always there. You can always hear the kind of presence of the pig in the background. And we say we're a hundred percent confident, but the pig has other ideas. Does that make sense?



Sarai: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Sarai, I know you have to go. Do you have any questions or concerns?

Sarai: No. You gave me a lot of help.

Dr. Glenn: Do you feel better?

Sarai: Yes.

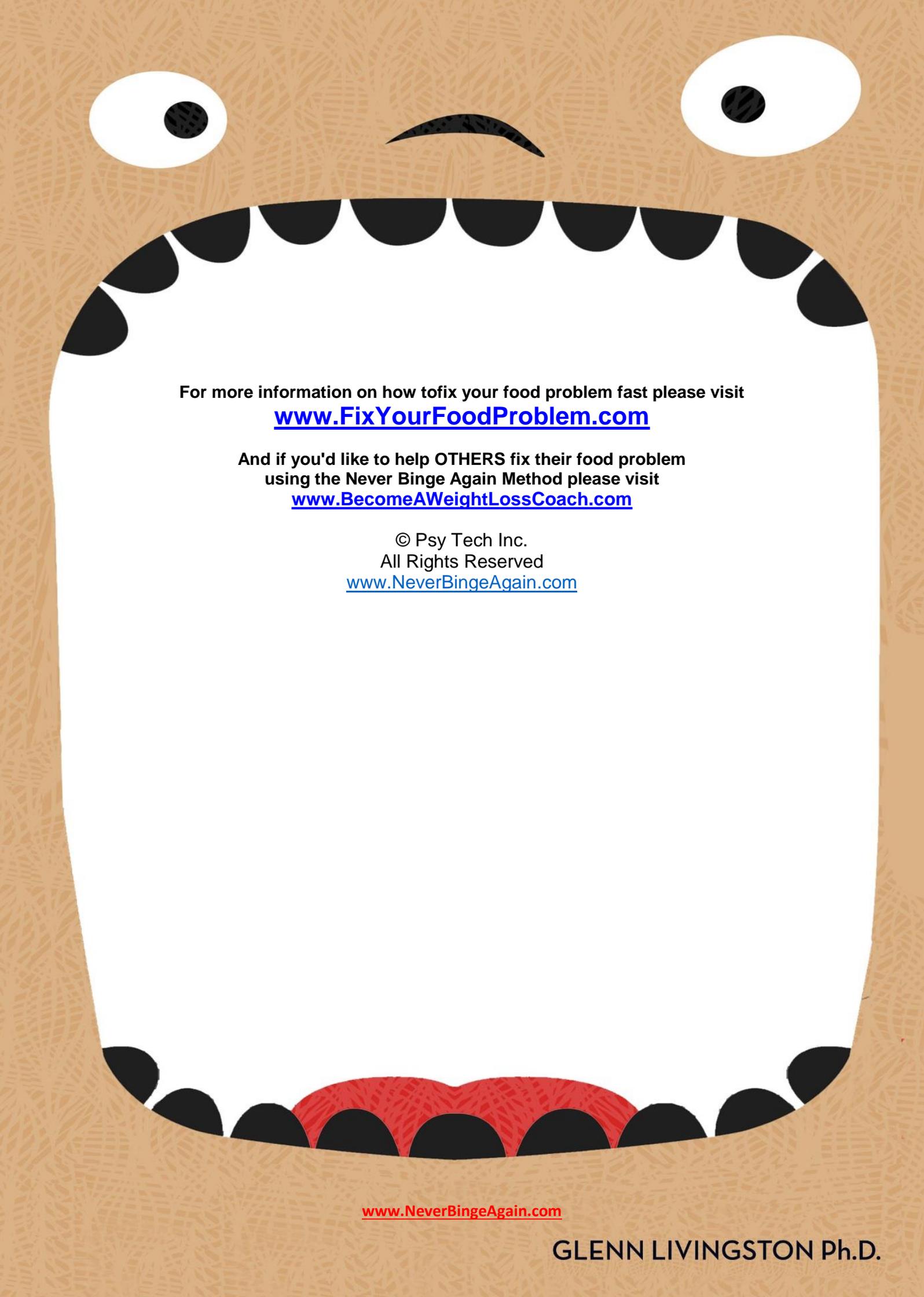
Dr. Glenn: How confident are you that you're never going to binge again?

Sarai: A hundred percent.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. You get the idea. Now, what you want to do is just translate every urge to the pig; assign it to the pig. Any doubt is the pig's doubt. Any urges, any craving is the pig's craving. If you start to hear in the back of your mind, "I'm afraid I might binge, it's going to get me later. I never did so I never will," you just say, "Oh, that's because the pig really, really, really, really wants to binge and it's just planning to, that's all. I never binge now so I'll never binge again." Say that and that gets you through the moment, and that's all you have to do is get through that moment. Anyway, Sarai, thank you very much for your time. Thank you for sharing with everybody. I hope it helps you.

Sarai: Thank you.

Dr. Glenn: Be well, Sarai.



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