



The “Protection Clause” for Your Food Plan

Glenn Livingston, Ph.D. and Howie Jacobson, Ph.D.

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Dr. Glenn: Well hey, this is Glenn Livingston with Never Binge Again and I'm here with Howie Jacobson from Plant Yourself. How are you Howie?

Howie: Very well, looking forward to the mystery conversation of today.

Dr. Glenn: Well, I don't mean to be so mysterious about it, but I wanted to talk about one of the more subtle nuances of creating a food plan, because as you know in the Never Binge Again methodology, we talked about four categories of food rules that comprise a food plan. There are things that you will never do again, there are things that you will always do with whatever frequency is important to you, there are things that you will do or never do under certain conditions, and then there are things you do in an unrestricted way. The way that I work with people, I usually start with their most significantly difficult eating behavior or trigger food. So most people come to me and there's one thing that just really sets them off.

Sometimes we'll get on a comprehensive plan where we'll usually start with one, and then we add another one and by the time people have added two, they get the idea and they try to construct a whole set of rules and we tell them, try to have less than a half a dozen altogether, try to keep it really simple so you can remember them at the moment of impulse. But there's an analogy that's helpful, and the analogy is that your food plan is kind of like a contract and it's not that different from a legal contract in as much as it's got several clauses that all are meant



to hang together. For example I never eat chocolate. I only have pasta on days when I've exercised for two hours or more. I always eat at least one pound of leafy green vegetables everyday and I always floss my teeth before I go to bed, something like that.

They all hang together to support your health and they're an agreement that you've made with yourself. It might sound a little silly for me to present it as a legal contract because no one is going to sue you or take you to court if you break it, but there are some things -- I'm not an attorney but I've got a bunch of friends who are, and I've signed an awful lot of deals over the years being a guy who's run multi-million dollar businesses and things like that. There are some things in contracts which are intended to protect the spirit of the contract in the event that something goes wrong with one of those clauses.

So usually when I'll sign an agreement, there might be a clause that says something like, if any of the other clauses in this agreement are found to be invalid or illegal, all of the other clauses will still remain in full force. I forgot the exact language that goes along with that but it's something like that. That's really helpful to consider when you're developing a food plan because now the whole philosophy of Never Binge Again is that you're going to make a plan and you're never going to binge again, you're going to have perfect clarity and purge all possibility of failure and doubt from your mind. Put your hands over your inner pig's ear while we talk about this. Nevertheless, on a practical basis people do make mistakes and have to get back up again and get the contract back into full force again.

And the single most damaging thing that the pig says when you make a mistake on any one of your little clauses and your contract is, oh, well then this whole thing doesn't matter at all and we are totally free to



binge as much as we want to, at least until the end of the day, yippee! What I've been teaching my clients lately is the importance of having one of those protective clauses in their contract. If for any reason any of the clauses are found to be invalid or not sustainable, all the other clauses will hold in full force. And that's been working to really mitigate the damage of the mistakes that people make. I just wanted to kind of present that to you for your thinking, your experience with your coaching clients, what does it remind you of, do you think that's helpful or not helpful and does it remind you of any reasonably bad jokes you could interject.

Howie: Well everything reminds me of bad jokes. I try to let them settle for a while to see if they want to pop back up. But it certainly reminds me that the pig never dies, right? So you have this contract. There's no death penalty for the pig. There's only like lifetime behind bars, and in those movies, like the superhero type movies when they want to have a sequel, the movie has to end on a really up note. The superhero is victorious, the villain has been vanquished but the villain is not dead. It reminds me of the finger in the sand and suddenly that twitches and you realize, all right, there's going to be a sequel.

Dr. Glenn: A sequel, right.

Howie: Right, so the kind of complacency at success is also one of the hallmarks of the pig's return. Oh, everything is going so great, no worries, no problems. So I like the idea of a protective contract just because you know there's always a potential for a sequel.

Dr. Glenn: So just to make sure that everybody totally understands why there's the potential for a sequel, it's because the pig is really our lower brain, our midbrain, our survival instincts and it's been directed at the wrong



alternatives. And the brain has kind of been mis-wired and reinforced for the hyper-palatable satisfaction that industry has engineered into these crazy, crazy foods that they have seduced us into eating, which actually do rewire the pathways in our brain and reinforce their own use every time that you do that. And so the pig has those memories, the lower brain theme is there. They get weaker every time that you choose to ignore them but they get stronger if you do make a mistake. And the pig will try to reorganize. When you've beaten it on one level it will try to find an exception. It's going to be poking for any possible loophole. That's why we talk about binge recovery methodologies even though our system is called Never Binge Again.

Howie: I have a question about that, we're admitting or acknowledging that what we call the pig is really part of our psyche, it's not going away, it's a deeper part of our brain than the part that you and I are using to talk or that someone is using to process this conversation and understand it and it's been hijacked by industry, by the food industry in particular. Is there a way, instead of just having this relationship with the pig where we say no and put it in the box, are there other things we can give the pig that are good for it and us?

Dr. Glenn: Well, I think that's a rhetorical question, right?

Howie: Not entirely, no, because we could either take this attitude of the pig stays in the box or we could say we could retrain the pig to enjoy celery, to be a pig for celery, or do you think that the pig acting like a pig is too dangerous?

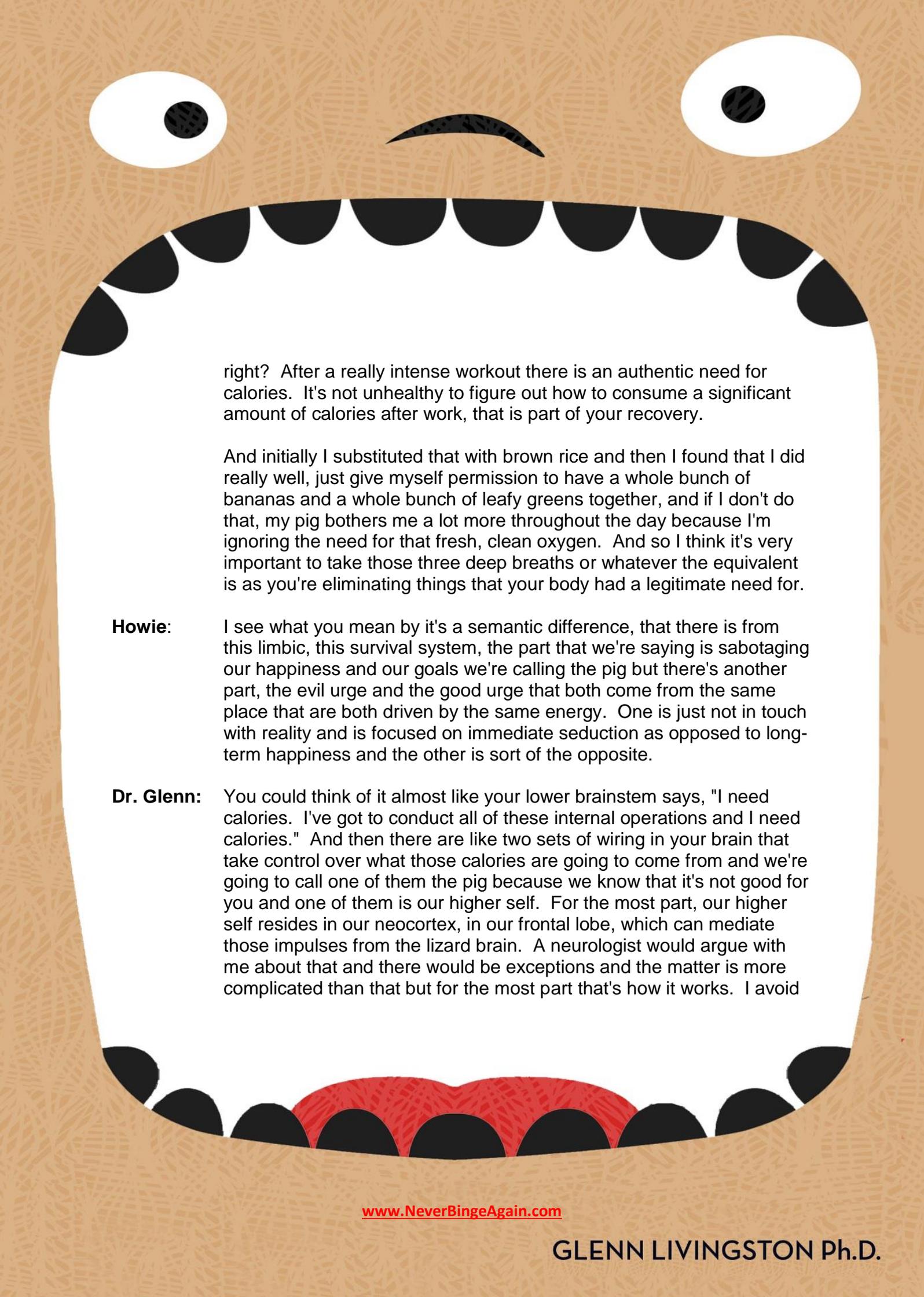
Dr. Glenn: In part I think it's a matter of semantics and I define the pig as the constellation of thoughts and feelings which are directed at destructive food goals. The moment that you're starting to feed yourself healthy



things to replace what the pig talked you into eating then by definition you're not feeding the pig, you're feeding yourself. And so for example I once heard Jack Trimpey from Rational Recovery say that if a smoker who has let go of smoking has given up smoking and vowed to never smoke again, I was going to say that if that smoker takes three really big deep breaths with size, that he's filling his lungs with oxygen, and what's happening there is that he's redirected the survival drive which had been hijacked by the cigarettes, he's redirected it towards what it really needs. And that's a critical part of smoke recovery, is to teach yourself to enjoy fresh breaths of good, clean air, maybe go walk by the ocean, maybe walk in the woods and breathe the way nature intended us to breath.

Similarly with food, I think that our inner pigs, I think industry has seduced us away from eating leafy green vegetables and whole organic, ripe, fresh, raw plants, fruits and vegetables basically or seeds and all those other things that are part of a whole foods, plant-based diet, one of the critical things that I tell people is after they have gotten rid of the first rule which they put the pig in the box about and you say, "Sorry pig, that's it for you," that for every subsequent rule, you really need to figure out what you're going to add, what's the equivalent going to be of taking those three deep breaths of oxygen.

So for example, I've really got a thing for massive amounts of pasta. My pig loves pasta, I've gotten in a lot of trouble eating a lot of pasta before and I had to create a rule that said I could only have it in association with a post-intense exercise recovery, otherwise it just turned my system off and it just really wasn't working and I almost entirely don't have it anymore, period. But as I was separating from that, I had to figure out, well, what does pasta actually provide? It's providing a massive amount of calories and that's an authentic need,



right? After a really intense workout there is an authentic need for calories. It's not unhealthy to figure out how to consume a significant amount of calories after work, that is part of your recovery.

And initially I substituted that with brown rice and then I found that I did really well, just give myself permission to have a whole bunch of bananas and a whole bunch of leafy greens together, and if I don't do that, my pig bothers me a lot more throughout the day because I'm ignoring the need for that fresh, clean oxygen. And so I think it's very important to take those three deep breaths or whatever the equivalent is as you're eliminating things that your body had a legitimate need for.

Howie: I see what you mean by it's a semantic difference, that there is from this limbic, this survival system, the part that we're saying is sabotaging our happiness and our goals we're calling the pig but there's another part, the evil urge and the good urge that both come from the same place that are both driven by the same energy. One is just not in touch with reality and is focused on immediate seduction as opposed to long-term happiness and the other is sort of the opposite.

Dr. Glenn: You could think of it almost like your lower brainstem says, "I need calories. I've got to conduct all of these internal operations and I need calories." And then there are like two sets of wiring in your brain that take control over what those calories are going to come from and we're going to call one of them the pig because we know that it's not good for you and one of them is our higher self. For the most part, our higher self resides in our neocortex, in our frontal lobe, which can mediate those impulses from the lizard brain. A neurologist would argue with me about that and there would be exceptions and the matter is more complicated than that but for the most part that's how it works. I avoid



strictly thinking of it in terms of anatomy and I think of it in terms of a conceptual differentiation instead.

Howie: Got you. So back to the contract, I'm curious when people hear that and then they go back to their lives and they have a binge. How does the pig argue against that contract clause and how do people enforce it? Just because we made a mistake doesn't mean we're off the hook.

Dr. Glenn: Well, if you are working with a toolset and you accidentally swing back the hammer a little too far and bang out a single tooth, does it necessarily follow that it's a really good idea to bang out all the rest?

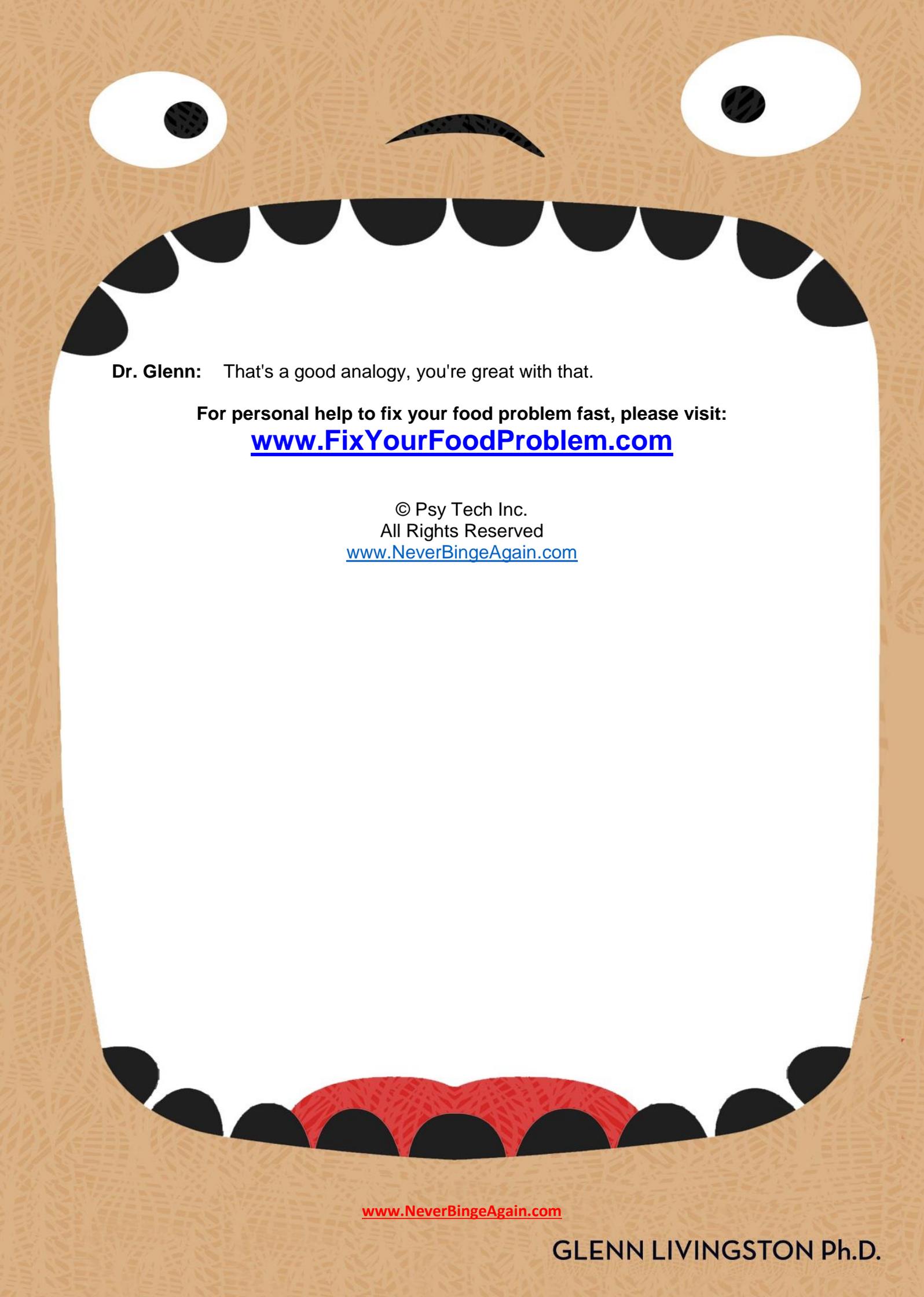
Howie: Clearly no.

Dr. Glenn: Right. So that's the effective argument that the pig is making when it says that all of the contract should be destroyed because we accidentally destroyed this one contract. The complication is that it's really pleasurable for the pig to do that. It's not just banging on teeth but it's really pleasure seeking. But it's essentially the same thing and when people realize that, they are able to stop begging on their teeth.

Howie: Got you. So having that safety clause gets people to recall that metaphor.

Dr. Glenn: Yes, yes, exactly.

Howie: That definitely helps me, that idea of the contract, just an extra -- like a bit of duct tape on my pocket or a sewing kit. I don't expect my past to split and the butt when I bend down but if I'm going to trip, I always take a sewing kit.



Dr. Glenn: That's a good analogy, you're great with that.

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