



**Glenn Livingston, Ph.D.
and Vanessa
Bread Bagels 009**

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Dr. Glenn: Hey, this is the very good Dr. Glenn Livingston with Never Binge Again. I'm here today to talk about bread, bagels, flour, and pasta troubles, and I'm here with Vanessa. How are you, Vanessa?

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

Dr. Glenn: I'm good. How are things going with bread, bagels, pasta, and flour?

Vanessa: Oh my, it is such a hard one for me. It's going better because I have my rules, but I still have my mind that wants them.

Dr. Glenn: Tell me what your rules are.

Vanessa: Well, right now, I'm having no white flour and no Italian food -- that would take care of the pasta. Those are really the two rules I have right now. I don't have any other kind of bread in the house. I'm not tempted to eat that at this point.

Dr. Glenn: What type of flour or bread or pasta or bagels are you eating? I know you're not having any white flour.



Vanessa: Oatmeal flour, basically, I've got in the pantry but I haven't touched it yet. But I'm thinking more of getting like whole wheat in that kind of whole grain bread and I'm trying of toying with that idea, but it's just been so fearful to me. I could just sit down and eat a whole loaf of bread in one moment. It's really got a hold on my pig.

Dr. Glenn: Mm-hmm. Is it that the rule says no flour or Italian food but you've not been having any flour?

Vanessa: No, I haven't been. I have to really go over my rules again with my coach because I don't really like that so conflicted thoughts about it. So right now, I'm not eating any flour at all.

Dr. Glenn: Well, would you like me to coach you today?

Vanessa: Yes, I would. That would be very helpful. Thank you.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. I had a little something to do with training those coaches. So the problem is the rule allows certain kinds of flours.

Vanessa: It does.

Dr. Glenn: You're not having any but you're constantly thinking about, could I have this or could I have that.

Vanessa: Right. I'm constantly thinking about I would just go bake some toast and sit down and eat half a loaf of bread that we do have.

Dr. Glenn: Vanessa, have you ever considered giving up flour entirely?



Vanessa: I know. I haven't. It kind of scares me to think about that. But yeah, I think, for my sake, that must be the way I have to go. It's just so constantly on my brain that I want to do with flour. When you mentioned the word bagels for this topic, I was like, "Oh my, bagels, I really want one right now," kind of thinking. It's like just on the edge my mind to have something with flour.

Dr. Glenn: You're describing the problem in exquisite detail, and it's a really good illustration of the two-mindedness of addiction. There's a part of you that would like to be free of it entirely and there's a part of you that just won't let go.

Vanessa: Exactly, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: That ambivalence can go on forever. The ambivalence wears you down. It requires mental energy to fend off those thoughts.

Vanessa: It really does.

Dr. Glenn: I don't know for certain what you should do here. I just want to describe the situation a little bit as I see it because I think your pig has you in a bind just where it wants you. I think that it's with the ambivalence, it's going to keep wearing you down until you give in. That's my opinion about this setup here of what you're describing. Now, that's not true for everyone. Other people feel too tortured by the idea of never having it and they do better with the conditional rule.

But what you're describing here, because of your history -- and only you can decide this, I can't really decide this for you but I can tell you what I see in a lot of people, because of your history with bread and flour, because it tastes so good to you, because the way that you set



up the rule, the pig really could figure out how to go to town and eat a whole loaf of bread, right? You could make a whole loaf of oatmeal bread or whole grain bread.

You're not really protected from the pig in this situation. We could either try to tighten it up, like figure out what other things the pig would do and maybe make specific prohibitions against that, or we can consider as an experiment letting go of flour for 90 days, right? Just having no flour for 90 days and see how it feels.

Vanessa: Yeah, I like that thought, although 90 days seems so long. I was like, let's do 30 days and then if that's good, do another 30 and then go on from there.

Dr. Glenn: I could definitely support that. So the rule would be I will never eat flour again, because that's how you present it to the pig, remember because the pig is like a two-year-old.

Vanessa: Right.

Dr. Glenn: Actually, it would be, I'll never eat flour between now and, can we say December 1st?

Vanessa: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: Because we're talking on October 28. So let's give us the full month of November a little bit of a head start. Is that all right?

Vanessa: Yes. It's great. That seems more manageable than like 90 days. That freaks me out a little bit. So the 30, that would be great.



Dr. Glenn: What typically happens when people do that is that they get the physical addiction out of their brain and they can think a little clearer about what they want, and they ask themselves, "Well, do I want to go back to the way it was, do I want to make some more strict, conditional rule, do I want to make some very clear exceptions?" Usually, having that initial period of like training wheels works really well for them.

Vanessa: Okay.

Dr. Glenn: But I feel a little bit like I'm putting words in your mouth and I don't want to do that, Vanessa.

Vanessa: No, no. I'm reacting like with little words. Wow, this is going to be something adventurous in one way, and then wow, I'm taking everything away that I love. It's terrible you love food, but the bread and the pasta, they just have such a hold on me. So I really do like this thought of stopping all kinds of flour then go on from there. I'd gladly listen to you.

Dr. Glenn: I want you to imagine life in two different ways on December 1st. The first way is that you had no flour, whatsoever. And the second way is that you kept the current rule. Okay? The current rule is no white flour or Italian food.

Vanessa: Right.

Dr. Glenn: What happens on December 1st? Describe the Vanessa that I see if she had no flour whatsoever between now and December 1st.

Vanessa: My mind would be a lot clearer and not, as you say, going towards thinking about having it every moment. It's torturing me. So I see



myself as being not tortured, feeling better, feeling healthier. I'm feeling proud of myself for accomplishing that.

Dr. Glenn: Feeling proud.

Vanessa: Yeah. I don't feel good about myself, and I just let the pig not have any of this flour that it wants.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. When you say that your mind is clearer and you're not tortured, could you stick that in the positive? So your mind is clearer, that's positive. You're not tortured by flour thoughts, so what are you thinking about?

Vanessa: I'm thinking about different things in life. I'm just getting my mind off of food completely, actually, and just thinking about living life and going out and doing things, not just always being tortured by these food thoughts. They won't be there. My mind will be clearer and I'll be able to do things that will make me happy.

Dr. Glenn: And even though you might have told me before, could you tell me what these things are again?

Vanessa: I would like to go out and volunteer. I actually like to just go out and do some physical stuff, some walking and taking care of myself that way. And I feel like I will be more geared to doing it instead of sitting home thinking about food. Visiting people with my husband, that was one thing that we talked about before.

Dr. Glenn: Because your husband is a pastor, right?



Vanessa: Yeah, right. Just doing "me" things, I'm kind of thinking of it, instead of being a slave to my eating.

Dr. Glenn: Because going through life with the monkey in your back is no way to go through life, right, for all these things you could do.

Vanessa: Yeah, exactly. Yeah. I've gotten in such a little rut here.

Dr. Glenn: When you say that you could feel proud of yourself, can you say more about what that looks like?

Vanessa: It looks like myself being happy with myself, feeling good that I accomplished something, something good. That just feels really wonderful to me, that thought there, just being able to accomplish something.

Dr. Glenn: When was the last time you accomplished something good that you were proud of?

Vanessa: Oh golly, it's been so long. I can't even remember because I'm just like sitting there and a slave to this food for so long.

Dr. Glenn: When you were a kid, you remember accomplishing something good, being proud?

Vanessa: Yeah, yeah. In high school and that sort of thing, getting the good grades and being considered one of the nicest people. I've got an award for that.

Dr. Glenn: You've got an award for being one of the nicest people?



Vanessa: Yeah, yeah. It's kind of funny.

Dr. Glenn: You are one of the nicest people.

Vanessa: Oh well, thank you.

Dr. Glenn: I'll give you an award for that.

Vanessa: Okay. I felt proud then. And of course, I felt proud when I had my daughter and watching her grow up and seeing that she's come out to be a very good person. That makes me proud.

Dr. Glenn: What was it like the day she was born?

Vanessa: Oh, it's just so amazing. It's just so unbelievable. It's a wow moment in your life that you've been able to create something so wonderful.

Dr. Glenn: You remember the look in her face and your face?

Vanessa: Yeah, yeah. She had a nose all scrunched up and looks kind of funny, like she didn't want to be here right away. It wasn't time.

Dr. Glenn: That's funny. Put me back, mom.

Vanessa: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: When you said you got good grades, was there a particular class that you worked hard to get good grades in?

Vanessa: Yes, in English, English composition and -- I do like to write, and I haven't done that for a while.



Dr. Glenn: What do you like to write?

Vanessa: I like to just write little short stories of fiction.

Dr. Glenn: Really?

Vanessa: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: What was the last story that you wrote?

Vanessa: Oh gosh, that was a while ago. It was about a unicorn for my granddaughter.

Dr. Glenn: About a unicorn?

Vanessa: Yeah. She wanted unicorns at that point in her life, and so I made a little story for that. There are good things and I do see where I was feeling pretty proud.

Dr. Glenn: Yeah. Now, let's look at another vision where you have no white flour or Italian food but you do allow all the types of flour between now and December 1st. What do you see?

Vanessa: I just see being in a place where I'm a little sluggish and unable to do these things. I just don't feel up to it.

Dr. Glenn: If you keep doing what you're doing for five years, 10 years, do you envision things will stay the same or get worse?



Vanessa: Well, I would envision it would get worse. Physically, it would get worse, and mentally, I don't see that getting better. It would just be pulling me down so much more.

Dr. Glenn: What would get worse, mentally worse?

Vanessa: Yeah. The depression probably would get worse and just not thinking happy thoughts and good thoughts. I would just be more of a negative person and I don't really want that. The obsessions would bring me down.

Dr. Glenn: So the obsession really crowds out the memories and feelings and that feeling you had when Liv was born or when you got good grades or when you write the stories or go visiting with your husband. It crowds that out. It takes all your energy.

Vanessa: Yeah, it does. I guess I'd never really realized that. It just takes the energy away because I'm really blessed in a sense that my husband will fix his own meal, so I'm not tempted to fix him pasta and bread and things like that. He'll take care of himself.

Dr. Glenn: You're pretty lucky like that.

Vanessa: Yeah, yeah. I know a lot of husbands won't do that kind of thing.

Dr. Glenn: Some wives won't do that kind of thing either.

Vanessa: Yeah, it's true.

Dr. Glenn: So then what happens is that the food obsession, it crowds out all those positive experiences and positive feelings. And then what's left



are the negative thoughts and feelings. And then the pig seizes on that to exaggerate them because the more negative thoughts and feelings you have, the more likely it can convince you to that bagel is the only way to get away from that.

Vanessa: Right, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: So it's like a downward cycle.

Vanessa: Yes, it is. I mean, the more that I eat the flour and the bagels and the bread, the more I just go down into a depression.

Dr. Glenn: It physiologically makes you depressed also because of the glycemic bounces and everything that your body has to do to recover from that.

Vanessa: Right. Yes, yes, that's true. Even waking up in the morning and not feeling well because I've eaten bread in the evening. I still taste it, which is really not a good feeling.

Dr. Glenn: Would you like to commit having no flour between now and December 1st?

Vanessa: Yes, I would like to commit to that.

Dr. Glenn: How strongly would you like to commit to that?

Vanessa: Very strong. I'm really excited about that. It would be a hundred percent to commit to that, to make that rule.

Dr. Glenn: Why does your pig say you can't do it or won't or shouldn't?



Vanessa: Oh, the pig will always say that, and I will just tell the pig, "Well, this is my commitment I've made that I'm not going to give into what you want at this point." Well, probably, never. I don't know if we really can say never because you don't really know the future. You just have to take it like commitment at a time, I think.

Dr. Glenn: So the pig says you can't ever say never.

Vanessa: I guess what I'm going to say is I can. That's a good point, yeah. I can say never to the pig, keep the pig caged.

Dr. Glenn: Can I ask you a question?

Vanessa: Sure.

Dr. Glenn: Are you ever going to spit on nice people on the street?

Vanessa: No.

Dr. Glenn: You're never going to do that?

Vanessa: No, I'm never going to do that. That's true.

Dr. Glenn: Are you ever going to grab a stranger and just hug them and not let them go?

Vanessa: No.

Dr. Glenn: You're never going to do that?

Vanessa: I'll never going to do that.



Dr. Glenn: How can you say never?

Vanessa: Because I just know that's not something that I would do. Why would I start doing that? I have never done it before and I'll never do it.

Dr. Glenn: Are you ever going to break the law in a serious way, kidnap someone or rape or murder someone?

Vanessa: No, no. I'll never do that.

Dr. Glenn: How do you know?

Vanessa: It's just something, again, I have never done and I would never feel right doing that, so I won't do that. I don't want to get in trouble with the law.

Dr. Glenn: But how can you be sure?

Vanessa: Because it's just inside me that I know I'm not going to do that. I'd tell myself, if I ever had that thought that that's not a good thought to have and not a good action to take.

Dr. Glenn: Are you ever going to go to your neighbor's house and take all their food while they're not there?

Vanessa: No. That's something I never would do.

Dr. Glenn: Even if they're really hungry and they have a cupboard full of bagels?

Vanessa: No. That's tempting but I wouldn't do it.



Dr. Glenn: If you wanted to say that you're never going to have flour again, could you say that?

Vanessa: Yes. I see the point. Yeah, I could do that. Thank you.

Dr. Glenn: Your commitment is until December 1st, but if you wanted to say you're never going to have it again, you could do that. See, even though we have the ability to change our plan later on if we want to, we want to be able to present to the pig that it's really never, that it's set in stone, because otherwise, it can distract us with a lot of doubt and uncertainty, and the doubt and uncertainty wears us down.

Vanessa: Okay. Yeah, I see that. That's so true.

Dr. Glenn: Why else does the pig say that you can't or shouldn't do this?

Vanessa: Oh, the pig would say that I'm a failure, and if I don't do it, I'm a failure and I'm just not a good person. The pig is really mean.

Dr. Glenn: The pig is really mean. So you're a failure and you can't do this. It doesn't mind making you feel like a failure as long as you keep feeding it.

Vanessa: Exactly, yeah. That's one thing I have to write down for myself just to remember that I am not a failure and that I can do this and I can say never.

Dr. Glenn: Can I ask you a question, Vanessa?

Vanessa: Mm-hmm.



Dr. Glenn: How does it make you feel about the pig that it would make you feel like a failure for the rest of your life just so that it could have a bagel?

Vanessa: It sounds unreasonable. It certainly isn't true. I know that I wouldn't be a failure.

Dr. Glenn: It's kind of sociopathic, right?

Vanessa: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: You would not tell your daughter that she's a failure just so that you could have a bagel, right?

Vanessa: Oh, right. No, I wouldn't do that.

Dr. Glenn: You want to get to see that scrunched up nose again.

Vanessa: I do. I love the image. No, I wouldn't do that. That's a good point too.

Dr. Glenn: I'd like to help people move from a position of feeling victimized and hopeless and at the mercy of their pigs to feeling really angry and fed up with their pigs. One of the ways to get fed up is to recognize the sociopathy of the pig, that the pig just doesn't care, just doesn't care. It will make you feel like a failure the rest of your life. It doesn't care if you're horrendously depressed every day between now and the day that you die. As long as you eat bagels, it's okay. That's not someone I want hanging around. That's not someone that I want to make friends with.



Vanessa: No. Most definitely, no. But it's interesting. I've never thought of it that way.

Dr. Glenn: Why else does the pig say that you won't, can't, or shouldn't do this?

Vanessa: It will tell me that it's not a healthy way to eat, that you need to have the carbs, you need to have those things every once in a while, maybe daily, just to feed him.

Dr. Glenn: Daily carbs?

Vanessa: Yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Is a bagel the best place to get your daily carbs?

Vanessa: Yeah. That's what the pig would tell me.

Dr. Glenn: Is that true?

Vanessa: No, that's not true at all. You can get carbs through fruit and other healthy items, and I would just tell the pig that.

Dr. Glenn: Do you think you need to check this with your doctor? Will your doctor tell you that he'd prefer you to have bagels? You have a bagel deficiency. Would the doctor tell you that?

Vanessa: No, most likely not. He wouldn't tell me that.

Dr. Glenn: He's going to tell you you have a pasta deficiency or a flour deficiency?



Vanessa: No. No, I guess not. I never thought that, the flour deficiency, but that's something that he wouldn't tell me, of course.

Dr. Glenn: Do you know anybody who's ever been diagnosed with a flour deficiency?

Vanessa: No.

Dr. Glenn: So what do you tell the pig when it says that you need to get your daily carbs from bagels and flour?

Vanessa: It's wrong, that I do not need the carbs from that type of food. There are other types of foods. And I might even tell him that there is no such thing as a flour deficiency.

Dr. Glenn: There's no such thing as a flour deficiency.

Vanessa: Exactly.

Dr. Glenn: Because there wasn't any flour on the savanna. There wasn't any flour when we were evolving. There can't be any such thing as a flour deficiency.

Vanessa: Right.

Dr. Glenn: What else does your pig say? Why can't, won't, or shouldn't you do this?

Vanessa: It says that I don't care about him and that I should care more about what the pig wants and do what the pig says.



Dr. Glenn: Now, it's crying. "You don't care about me, Vanessa. I'm suffering. You don't care. You need to feed me." Right?

Vanessa: Exactly, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: What do you think about that?

Vanessa: Well, I would say that the pig was wrong and the pig needs to stop crying and needs to pay attention to what I want, not what it wants.

Dr. Glenn: Because who's the boss?

Vanessa: I am, and I want to keep the pig caged.

Dr. Glenn: Could you say that a little louder for me? Who's the boss?

Vanessa: I am.

Dr. Glenn: You're the boss of your pig.

Vanessa: Yes, I am.

Dr. Glenn: Okay. Who's the boss of your pig?

Vanessa: I am. I certainly am.

Dr. Glenn: You are. You're the boss of your pig. What else does your pig say?

Vanessa: The pig is at the corner, just not knowing what to say now, that he's just sulking. He's not getting its own way.



Dr. Glenn: There you go.

Vanessa: And I don't mind that it's sulking. I don't feel sorry for it.

Dr. Glenn: I'm glad that it's sulking. It's about time. Put it in the corner, let it suffer.

Vanessa: Yes.

Dr. Glenn: How confident do you feel that you're going to have no flour between now and December 1st?

Vanessa: I feel really confident. I feel a hundred percent confident. It's just not going to be in my plan.

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

Vanessa: No, I don't. I do have a concern in a sense that I'm having surgery next week and people are going to bring me food. So I'm just going to have to tell them no carbs, no anything with flour.

Dr. Glenn: They could bring you fruit if you want to, right?

Vanessa: Yeah, that's a good suggestion, fruit and vegetables. I'll tell them that's what I want.

Dr. Glenn: Or something else that's on your plan.

Vanessa: Yes, yeah.

Dr. Glenn: Do you have any other questions or concerns?



Vanessa: No, no. Well, thank you for this. This has really been an eye-opener.

Dr. Glenn: Who's the boss of your pig?

Vanessa: I am and no one else.

Dr. Glenn: There you go.

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