

The Binge Trap

I remember it well. It was early in the morning, I had just woken up, the sun was shining through the curtains. I had just finished University and I was feeling good about myself. As I lay in bed I made a decision there and then. Enough was enough. Today was the day. No matter what, I was not going to binge on food. I felt absolutely 100% determined. I was going to do it. Nothing was going to stop me. I was going to use every ounce of my willpower, determination and strength. I felt confident. I felt empowered. I felt like I was ready to take it on.

4 hours. I lasted 4 miserable hours.

I felt devastated. What was wrong with me? Why couldn't I just stop myself? Where was my willpower?

I honestly believed that if I held out long enough and ignored the urge to binge it would just disappear.

And that was it. Right there. The most common mistake people make when they are attempting to overcome binge eating. Relying solely on willpower. So, off the bat, I want to tell you there is nothing wrong with your willpower. Your willpower is fine. Perfectly normal.

The problem is that you are trapped. Your body, mind and emotions have become trapped in a continual cycle of bingeing on food. Until you break free from the trap, binge urges will always remain. They'll never go away. Eventually your willpower to resist the urge runs out.

Imagine you're caught in a rope trap. It wouldn't matter how much you struggled and tried to escape, until the ropes were untied you would always remain trapped. It's not a matter of you just "wanting to escape enough", you need to be physically released before you can be free.

Think of your willpower like a battery pack. It's good for short term goals and general motivation. No one has enough willpower to continually resist the urge to binge forever. Eventually, no matter how determined you are, if the urge is there, you will give in. This is the reason why your most fervent promises to stop bingeing, made in the heat of post-binge shame and exasperation, so often fail.

THE 7 KEYS TO UNLOCK THE BINGE TRAPS

Over the past ten years working with binge eaters and bulimia, I have identified seven traps that hold people in a continual cycle of bingeing on food. I call these 'the binge traps'.

The binge traps are a prison that hold us trapped in a cycle of binge eating, emotional eating and food obsession. They make us feel guilty and ashamed about what we have eaten. They make us feel powerless and weak around food and they keep us stressed, emotionally drained and overweight.

If you binge on food, chances are all seven traps will apply to you. Some traps may be more relevant to you than others but I'm pretty confident that you will find elements in each that you can relate to.

To get back in balance we first have to navigate our way out of the seven binge traps. In doing so we help to balance our body, mind and emotions. A balanced body does not want to hold on to any excess weight. A balanced body does not want to binge on food. By staying in balance you make sure you never again fall back into the binge traps.

1. The Diet Trap Key: Under-eating leads to over-eating. Let go of restrictive diets, they don't work. Eat enough food to satisfy your biological requirements. Spread that nutrition throughout the day by avoiding gaps of longer than 3 hours without eating. Try not to graze in-between meals. This will help set a rhythm for your body.

2. The Yo-Yo Blood Sugar Trap Key: Aim to have each meal (and preferably each snack) consist of a ratio of roughly 50% complex carbohydrates, 25% proteins and 25% fats. This will do wonders to stabilize your blood sugar levels and reduce your sugar cravings. Over time, discover the ratio that works best for you, so you feel fuller for longer and more satisfied after each meal.

3. The Nutritional Deficiency Trap Key: Start taking a high quality daily multivitamin. Aim to add more real, whole foods into your diet. You know, fresh vegetables, fruits, beans, whole grains, nuts, seeds and lean animal protein like fish, chicken and eggs (the type of food your great-grandmother would have eaten). This will help you feel REALLY satisfied after eating.

4. The Habit Trap Key: If you have a clear idea of when and where you tend to binge, break the habit by mixing up your routine and doing something different. For unexpected binge urges that

are triggered by an emotional event utilize the Zen10 technique. Each time you do this, you weaken the habitual conditioning.

5. The Food Rules Trap Key: Let go of your strict food rules. Allow yourself to eat all foods GUILT FREE. View food as 'sometimes food' and 'all the time food'. Avoid feeling deprived by eating a portion of 'sometimes food' regularly (this also helps remove any anxiety, guilt or fear associated with the food).

6. The False Friend Trap Key: Realize bingeing on food doesn't fix anything. It reduces your ability to cope and becomes a crutch. Something you feel you need to cope with daily life. It becomes a bigger problem than whatever emotion was being avoided in the first place. It's a false friend. Say goodbye to your false friend and instead become a real friend towards yourself. Be there for yourself and recognize at times we all need some nurturing and love.

7. The Inner Critic Trap Key: Stop blaming yourself for binge eating. It's not your fault. Go easy on yourself. You are not perfect and no one expects you to be perfect. Realize that you don't need a reason to love yourself. Repeat the "I love myself" mantra to yourself for a few minutes each day.

Losing Excess weight

If you have been bingeing on food for an extended period of time it may have lead to unnecessary weight gain. By following these steps you can expect your body to release any excess weight and eventually settle at its natural set point weight. At your set point you will find that your weight will be much more stable and easy to maintain.

Any excess weight you lose will come off gradually. You will need to have a little patience here. It won't be anything like the weight-loss you may have experienced in the past. You may experience some weight fluctuations. Some weeks there may be a slight weight gain and other weeks a slight weight loss, but, in general if you look at the big picture you will see an overall pattern of weight loss towards your set point.

Patience is important here. You must give your body time and space to heal and rebalance. I would suggest giving this process at least six months to unfold. Six months is such a small amount of time compared to a lifetime free from binge eating.

Following this program, if you are within the "normal" weight range for your height and build then chances are that you will end up at a very similar weight once your body finds its natural set point. If you are underweight, you may need to be prepared to gain some "required" weight.

The Zen10 Technique

1. When you notice you are craving a binge urge say the phrase “Zen10” to yourself.
2. Cultivate a sense of space between the craving and your need to act on that craving. Rest your mind in that space.
3. Wait 10 minutes before taking any action towards a binge. When the time is up, see if you can extend it by another 10 minutes. Try to keep going until the urge subsides.

To help cultivate a space you can:

- Use mental visualization to strengthen your resolve.
- Dismiss any binge urges. Brush them off and let them be.
- Apply the Rapid Release Technique for powerful urges.
- Apply the Calm Breath for deeper relaxation.

Rapid Release Technique

When the urge feels overwhelming use the Binge Codes Rapid Release Technique.

1. Take a very deep breath in and hold it .
2. Tense every muscle in your body for 5 seconds (this means you are contracting your toes, thighs, calves, buttocks, stomach, chest, arms and hands. You can even clench your jaw if you want. The more muscles you squeeze tight the better).
3. Release every muscle as you slowly exhale.
4. Rest for 10 seconds and then repeat 3-5 times. This should take you roughly less than 2 minutes.

The Calm Breath Technique

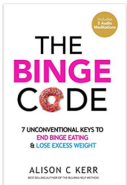
If you wish to calm yourself further you can use the Calm Breath Technique.

1. Inhale through your nose to the count of 4, breathe deeply into your belly and chest area and feel it expand.
2. Exhale through your nose, slowly count to 4 (or whatever rhythm is comfortable), allowing your body to relax and release tension.
3. Repeat for 2-5 minutes.

Habits

Build daily habits that allow you to implement the seven keys into your life. Apply the keys each day. Stay focused on the program regardless of any challenges or distractions that come your way. It is worth the effort. Binge freedom lies at the other end.

Extracted from the Binge Code Book



This cheatsheet has been extracted from parts of our best selling book “The Binge Code”. Learn more about the Binge Code Book [here](#).

Work one to one with a Healed Coach

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