

QA_RecoveryFocus

Question:

How much focus should I put on recovery? I worry that if I put too much focus on it, I'll actually be strengthening the binge eating habit.

Answer:

Like so many things in binge eating recovery, the answer to how much focus you need to put into recovery, or how much time you need to put into recovery, is going to be different for each person. If you're new to the Brain over Binge approach, and if you're just starting recovery, it might take a lot of time for you to understand the concepts, for you to start to have your own insights, and for you to start applying the concepts in your life. But for other people, you may need to just review the concepts and just get to work practicing dismissing urges and eating adequately.

It all really comes back to those two Recovery Goals of Dismissing Urges and Eating Adequately—you have to think about how much time, and energy, and effort you need to spend in order to accomplish those two goals. So if you're someone who really needs help in Eating Adequately, and you feel like you even need some nutritional advice from a dietician or nutritionist, you may need to spend a lot of time on that one goal. In the Eating Adequately section of the course, you may find yourself completing all the worksheets and listening to the audios multiple times. But if you're someone who already has a pretty good handle on how to eat, and eats pretty normally—aside from the binges—you may not need to spend a lot of time on Recovery Goal 2.

You may be someone who gets the hang of dismissing urges pretty much right away, and you may not need to listen to the coaching audios as much because you just kind of “get it” right away; or you may be someone who needs to listen to those coaching audios every day. You may be someone who has a lot of questions; you may be someone who just needs constant reinforcement—and you need to listen to the lessons multiple times. Either way is perfectly okay. You need to be able to trust yourself to kind of know what you need and use the course material in a way that best helps you accomplish those two Recovery Goals.

I don't want you to feel locked into spending a certain amount of time listening to the audios, or doing the worksheets, or having your own insights, or journaling; but I do want you to devote some amount of time to it, and give yourself that opportunity to make the changes that you want to make. Anytime you want to make change in your life, it is going to take some time and some effort, but the exact amount of time you spend is going to depend on your individual circumstances and even your schedule.

One thing that I want to be clear about is that I don't want you sitting around dwelling on your recovery. I don't want this to become a life-consuming process. It's very helpful to get out and to live your life and to focus on other things. When you focus on other things, you're actually deconditioning the pathways that keep you focused on your eating issues. So I think it's very beneficial to sort of develop your own balance of focusing on recovery—maybe listening to an audio, doing a worksheet, and then getting back to your regular life—and then revisiting some recovery concepts, and then getting back to doing other things.

So far, I've been talking about focusing on recovery kind of in relation to using the course material and how much focus to put into learning the concepts, doing the worksheets, listening to the audios. But

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where the changes are actually made and where recovery actually happens is when you're having binge urges, and you dismiss them, and when you're eating adequately. So whatever you're doing as far as the time and energy you're spending using the course material or using any other recovery resources, the most important thing you can do, and what's really going to move your recovery along, is practice dismissing those urges and practice eating adequately, and use the course material to support yourself in doing that.

You definitely won't need everything that's in the course or every recovery resource that's out there. I want you to empower yourself to make this as efficient and as practical as possible for you. If you don't relate to a Q&A audio, then you don't have to listen to it. If any audio or worksheet doesn't seem applicable to you at this time, you're not doing anything wrong if you choose not to engage with that material at this time. You can always come back to it at a later date, if you feel like you need it. You basically want to take what you need, and then leave the rest—and then realize, like I said, that recovery is actually happening at the times you're dismissing urges and at the times that you're eating adequately.

As you get better at your 2 Recovery Goals, and as they start to feel more natural to you, you're going to need the course material less and less. You're naturally going to be able to focus on the rest of your life, and put your energy and time into other things, and not have to spend so much time focusing on recovery. Because really, that is your goal—to let go of this habit and to be able to be completely free of it...to be able to just move on with your life and not feel like you have to focus on recovery on an ongoing basis.

You may need to reinforce concepts for a while by revisiting the course material, but over time you don't want to be dependent on it. You want this to be in the past, and it definitely can be in the past. I don't believe you have to continue working on recovery for the rest of your life. So put in the time to make the changes that you want to make, dismiss those urges, eat adequately, and then you'll no longer have to focus on recovering. You can just focus on living.