The Grass is Always Greener.

I’m lying on my stomach on my bed in my room in Bogotá… it hurts to lie on my stomach. Because I binge ate tonight…. *Again*.

I cringed a little bit writing that.

I hate giving thoughts or ideas or feelings fuel when they are limiting or bad. I sometimes worry about defining binges because I feel like it can give them a little push in my brain. If I continually think about binging and eating disorders (even if it’s in an attempt to think healthy and curing and recovery thoughts) the fact of thinking about it at all is paving pathways in my head to be in the headspace of an eating disorder.

If I’m being honest, I’ve had some sad and mad and not great thoughts today, and the last few days.

It’s such a shame! I feel like I was thriving so well here, I was really being productive every day, I was feeling good about myself and my body, I was smiling constantly at myself in the mirror, I was dancing naked, I was so stoked on life… and then what switched?? I’ve only been here for two weeks as of tonight.

Was it the herpes? I feel like as soon as I get cold sores on my mouth I instantly lose all of my confidence. I feel like I’m not able to smile because I don’t want to crack the cold sores on my lips, which causes me to smile less in general. I feel like I can’t talk as much because of the pain. I get so self conscious about how my mouth looks with these gross sores on them so I feel constantly self conscious… it makes me unable to talk as well and when I do talk I blush and feel flustered.

I didn’t go out this last weekend or meet anyone because I knew I couldn’t with the sores on my lips. I’ve been binging the last few days now.

In all honesty, I think I’ve been ‘binging’ in a subtle way most days since Betti left the reserve.

I’ve been hiding my eating, not wanting to eat around other people, I’ve been going on stealthy and quick visits to the grocery store to pick up foods that are easy to snack on, foods that aren’t healthy, foods that are a combination of greasy, salty, sugary, and just plain awful for me. Binging foods.

Today, I was feeling feverish all day. I think it might be a result of the herpes outbreak, or maybe I am just sick from a regular illness. Either way, I got pulled into helping at the school all day, so I only had an apple for breakfast, then I had the regular lunch of soup, beans, rice, and avocado. I was actually feeling pretty full after lunch because I didn’t get the chance to poop this morning so I think my bowels were a little uncomfortable.

But then, after school, I found myself up in my room just waiting for Laura and her parents to leave so that I could go downstairs and gorge myself on food before my eating period finished at 6 pm. When I discovered they were going to be around for a while and I wouldn’t be able to sneak having a TON of food, I went to the grocery store to buy snacks that I could keep in my room. I took everything up to my room and heated up leftovers. I ate the leftovers. I ate arepas with cheese. I ate yogurt. I thought I would stop there…. Then I ate a chocolate donut I got. I ate a pack of 2 cookies. And then another pack.

And then another.

Then I finished the Netflix series I’ve been watching: *Easy*

I wonder if my laziness began when I started binge watching this show last week. Since then, I’ve been finding excuses to be a recluse, and I’ve been unable to eat without having something to watch in front of me. Then I became so used to having the show playing while eating that I felt like I couldn’t watch the show without eating during it.

After the series ended, I started watching youtube videos about binge eating disorder. I watched videos that people have made of themselves binging… I didn’t realize those were out on the internet. It made me feel much more normal about filming myself binging the other day.

I started to feel both better and worse about my binge while watching those videos. I felt like I was simultaneously gaining control over myself and my actions and also feeling so compulsive and needing to continue eating that it would be impossible to avoid.

5:55 pm hit and I realized I only had 5 minutes left in my eating period before I had to call it quits for the day. I wasn’t hungry. My stomach still hurt from the big binge.

I ate an entire green apple.

I’m conflicted about the intermittent fasting. I feel like it honestly does more good than it does harm. But, I have noticed over the last week that it has encouraged bad habits for my eating as well. I use intermittent fasting as an excuse to not intuitively eat. Last night after going for a run, I realized I only had 20 minutes left of my eating period and I was about to skip out on stretching so that I could shove down some food fast enough before the eating period was over, but I wasn’t even hungry for food yet… then part of me stopped and asked myself, *what the fuck?* *I’m not even hungry, I want to stretch and continue working out, I know I’ll be hungry in a little bit after I’ve worked out.. If I am doing intermittent fasting to be healthier and better for my body, why would I make a decision that is clearly counterintuitive to my health?*

I stretched, finished my workout, then made food in my own time. I was hungry by the time I ate dinner. I was an hour late on my intermittent fasting schedule.

But I’m really happy that I did that yesterday, it was obviously the better decision for my body.

I don’t think tonight was very unusual for me as of late. I am using my intermittent fasting as an excuse to binge.

The fortunate reality is that these binges are nothing like they were when I was at my worst last winter. I’m not shoveling down cartons of ice cream and peanut butter with loaves of bread and bags of chips, and then repeating the process…

I’m definitely binging though.

I am intentionally avoiding looking at the food that I am putting into my mouth. I don’t want to practice mindful eating. I want to have a tv show or movie playing while I eat to zone out. I don’t want to feel connected to my food. I want it to be loaded with oil, salt, or sugar. I have been craving sugar and processed foods more than I have in a long time. I am avoiding eating with other people or around other people. I feel reclusive about my food. I feel ashamed to let others know how much food I am eating. I want to hide how much I am eating to others.

That is disordered eating.

I’ve been trying to think about what it was in Koh Phangan that cured me so much of my eating disorder while I was there.

It wasn’t the whole time. I remember I was feeling impulsive and hiding my eating throughout the first three weeks of the YTT. I wasn’t binging by any means, because I genuinely couldn’t find a way to fill my body to the brim during the YTT. But I was wanting to hide what I was eating and I was struggling heavily with thoughts of disordered eating.

By the time I left Koh Phangan, I felt like I was at the best relationship I had been at with food in a long time.

As soon as I got back the California, I felt like I lost a lot of that. The first visit to Venice Beach I think I was able to keep up with it pretty well. But as soon as I went to Sequoia everything went to shit for my eating. I was eating rice crispy treats, I was eating candy, craving sweets, eating too much, wanting to hide what I was eating by the end of the trip, and not feeling good about what I was putting into my mouth.

At the time I was blaming it on the rapid reintroduction of weed back into my life. *Of course, it has to be weed! That is the one clear factor that has changed from Koh Phangan to now!*

But here I am, in Bogotá, and there is no weed in sight. I haven’t been drinking. And I’m binging again.

So what is the trigger this time?

Some possible ideas:

* Feeling like I can’t be outside and wandering for long periods of time. For example, I can only really walk in the park, and I feel like everyone is constantly staring at me… so I can’t really be myself. I have to wear black and avoid eye contact and look angry so that I can have some alone time outside… which makes me feel like I’m not myself. If I want to go anywhere else, I have to think about it very methodically because I don’t have the sim card to support being spontaneous.
* Not having more deep connection with others. I am really grateful for the women who work at this school, I think that they are a million times better for my mental health than the women I was surrounded by on the reserve (not to bag on those women, I’ve already written my thoughts about that). I love being around happy people who smile and are supportive. But, because of the language barrier - I really can’t connect deeper with them. I have been talking with Sam and sending voice messages to Clauds, and now I caught up with Yeng, and I feel like digitally I’m keeping up well with friends and family… but that being said, I think I need something a bit more in person in my life. The less that I interact with people in person, the less confident I feel. Then the brief interactions that I do have are quick and I find myself avoiding them more.
* The herpes! I think this played a huge role. Already wrote about it, but yeah I think that I’ve felt less confident and more self conscious the last few days than I have in a *long* time.
* Living alone. Having access to a kitchen, grocery store, and private space with no people to hold me accountable or to share meals with. No people to see how much food I am making.
* Feeling a bit of laziness / shame for not going out more while being here in Bogotá. I think this is one of the lesser evils in this list… because I have acknowledged that this time to be alone and to just have needed time to myself and to relax is very good for me as well.

I didn’t mean to make this an epoch about binge eating! Wow I really have just gone off on this one. I think it’s good to get all of this down though.

So yes, back to the beginning…

*The grass is always greener*.

I was reading some of my old diary entries during when I was in the depths of my binge eating disorder last winter and I’ve definitely been finding some trends in my life and in my head. One of them, the grass is always greener.

I think that I love to idealize a lot of things in my life. I like to wonder *what if* and convince myself that my fantasies are better than my reality.

When I’m in the USA, I convince myself that travelling is best for me. When I’m travelling, I get sad that I often miss being at home (at least while being here in South America). When I’m in school I am so stressed that I fantasize about being done with school forever. And now I’m about to start a PhD program. I fantasize about working from 7 am until 11 pm every day again, with to-do lists that I check off. When I’m living that life though, my back hurts, my head aches, my health declines, and my self-love plummets. When I’m in the thick of my eating disorder or a binge I picture that everything is so much better on the other side of the disorder. I imagine that if I was to stop binging and gain control over my relationship with food that I would lose weight and finally look how I’ve always wanted to. I’ve experienced weight loss. It didn’t solve my mental problems. Self love came before any weight loss did.

These thoughts are a bit all over the place.. My point is honestly that I tend to crave a life that I don’t have. It’s good to set goals to become a certain person or to do certain things in life, to start or stop certain habits… but it isn’t good to live in a world of *what if*s if it makes me believe that the life I’m currently living is bad.

One of my biggest cures for binging, self-hate, and disordered or depressed/lonely thinking is to be unequivocally present. For me to accept the present as it is in every way shape and form. To *accept* and even more, to ***love*** everything, just as it is. My sankalpa for yoga. My sankalpa for life.

I’m feeling a bit lost today I’m not going to lie.

I keep thinking about how when I go to Cali, I’m going to force myself to live in a dorm for a week and that being around other people will magically solve all of my problems. It will make me not want to binge anymore. It will make me unable to hide my food or my life from anyone. I’ll be surrounded by people so much that it will be impossible to not feel connected to others. I’ll have English around me so I can connect deeper. I’ll have events and classes I can attend that will make socializing less anxiety-ridden….

But then I wonder if that’s the greener grass mentality?

Am I over thinking everything? (YES)

Interesting day… I’m learning that alone time is very good for me - in the right environment. Too much alone time can literally drive me crazy.

Okay one last thought I want to get down.

I’m SO PROUD of how far I’ve come with my OCD habits. I was reading from last winter how I used to have to check my locked doors multiple times and check under my bed every night and in my closet and I couldn’t sleep with the lights off still… and fuck I am so proud!!! I have seriously pushed my way through all of those struggles. I honestly never knew if I would be able to overcome those OCD habits, they were pretty consuming. The sleeping in the dark one was something I legitimately thought might plague me for the rest of my life… but here I am!!!

Okay.

So I’ve written a lot here.

My head is all over the place, my brain is all over the place. I’m optimistic but I’m also realistic. I’m not perfect. I’m far from it. Some days I look at my imperfections and smile at them, high-fiving myself in the mirror and feeling genuine love. Some days I look at any imperfection and allow it to swallow me into a hole of nothingness.

Life is suffering.

The book, *The Subtle Art of Not Giving a Fuck* has really been influencing a lot of my thoughts lately. The greener grass mentality has made me realize that my idealizations of the future sometimes aren't realistic renditions of the suffering that I’ll be experiencing day-to-day to achieve the ideal snapshot of something in my head. For example, when I think of my PhD, I shouldn’t idealize this image of me sipping tea at a coffee shop, coding and crushing the data science game, working on passion projects, having lots of friends, feeling and looking healthy and amazing, giving speeches… I should imagine myself on a normal day. Probably a little bit stressed to be completely honest, maybe not able to keep up with working out for a while every day, not being able to be super skinny, having back pain from being at my computer for a while, wondering what it would feel like to have some genuine free time…

I don’t want to paint my PhD in a bad light, for all I know that first visualization might be pretty accurate! (fingers crossed). But one of the amazing things that the Subtle Art book showed me was that if I’m going to think the grass is greener, I can’t look at a make believe field of green and then attempt to get there. I have to be realistic and look at a field of dirty, muddy, grass - something that is realistic - and ask myself if those problems and pains that come with that field of grass are truly better than what I am experiencing now.

Life is suffering, but I can find the best ways to suffer.

Then, when I harness my suffering; when I truly accept and *love* my suffering, I can work even harder on being present. I can be so involved and happy and accepting and loving of my reality that the greenest grass only exists where I stand.