

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #100: Binge Eating Success Story - Lainie

Hi! Welcome to episode 100 of the podcast! How exciting is this?? I'm so excited.

Because I love milestones, I wanted to do something super fun for this episode so for the first time ever, I decided to bring on one of my former clients and have her share her binge eating story with you all.

Her name is Lainie, she's so freakin' cool, I absolutely loved working with her, we had so much fun, and I'm sure you're going to love her too.

She's someone, who just like you, struggled with binge eating and started listening to my podcast hoping to find a way out.

I think you'll find so much of her story to be relatable because, I mean, I do when I think about my own personal story, I see a lot of myself in her. I also hear similar stories to hers from so many people I have talked to and worked with.

So here we go, me and Lainie, episode number 100!

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Kirstin: Hi!

Lainie: Hi, how's it going?

Kirstin: Good. How are you?

Lainie: I'm so good, how're you?

Kirstin: Good. This is so fun. Look at you.

Lainie: I know, I'm really excited to be, I know but I'm actually kind of a little nervous, is that normal?

Kirstin: Yeah.

Lainie: I've never done anything like this before, but it's really exciting.

Kirstin: Oh my gosh. Well, I'm so happy that you have decided to join me. I think this is going to be really awesome and inspiring for a lot of people. So thank you for being on here.

Lainie: Thank you. That I'm in the state that I am, but I am excited to be doing it.

Kirstin: Yes. Awesome. So let's just start with your story. So tell me a little about yourself, your background with eating food, your weight, all the things.

Lainie: Yeah. So my name's Lainie. I had trouble with eating and eating behaviors for a long time, especially growing up. And I think as I was transitioning into college, I had started actually restricting and having issues with anorexia or what I was diagnosed with orthorexia, which is basically like focusing on an unhealthy obsession with healthy foods, which is ironic. But after that, my behaviors transitioned from deprivation to bingeing. And just a few months after leaving inpatient care for orthorexia, bingeing almost followed immediately. And then for about 10 years, I had continued those behaviors and in that time, weight fluctuating up and down, feeling really discouraged and not really knowing how to help myself. And I think in the back of my mind just thinking, well, it's not as bad as the alternative of where I was before and maybe not even thinking it was an issue. So I really was in denial for a lot of that time. And yeah, it's been a ride.

Kirstin: Yeah. So you were bingeing for 10 years?

Lainie: Yeah. About a decade.

Kirstin: Wow. And that's pretty much the same for me too, so totally with you. Yeah. So how often would you say that you were bingeing?

Lainie: So when I started bingeing, I wouldn't say they were more like episodes here and there. It would be every once in a while when I felt like I really just needed some type of release or wasn't able to manage my emotions either good or bad. And one of the reasons why I sought out help was because it was becoming much more frequent and feeling really overwhelming. And it was controlling me and I didn't really know what to do about it. So when, at my worst it was happening probably every other day of the week. And I think the only reason why it wasn't happening every day is because my body needed that buffer day, because it ached from overeating and my joints hurt or my muscles hurt. And I mean, I remember canceling commitments because I had binged and my husband would ask if I wanted to go out for dinner, but little does he know, earlier in the day I'd binged so bad that I couldn't enjoy that with him and I was so full.

Lainie: I have a memory of calling sick into work because I had binged just the night before and just felt so awful physically and mentally about my actions that I couldn't face the day.

Kirstin: Yeah, definitely. It sounds like there were times when you just couldn't binge, like it was not even a thought in your mind because you felt so awful about what had happened the day before. Right?

Lainie: Yeah. And I think a lot of that, I'll be honest, there are even times where I think mentally I could have, but physically I couldn't have. My body was recovering from the previous binge and just couldn't take it.

Kirstin: Yeah. Why do you think that bingeing was such a problem for you in your life?

Lainie: After a number of therapists and psychiatrists and even some medicine, I think I never understood the root of my issues and how it had evolved. And that bothered me because I felt like if I could pinpoint it to one thing or even a few things like some moments, I could go back and even fix

those or learn or grow from them and then everything would be solved. But frankly, after a while, bingeing became just part of a ritual or a part of my day, it became like this builtin thing that I relied upon and just kept getting worse and worse. It was like the solution to a problem I had. And in a really weird way, I'm just speaking for myself, it just started to feel comforting, it was my release.

Kirstin: Yeah. And that's why it can be so hard to let it go for a lot of people because it is comforting. You do find that comfort in it. And then if you're going to let the bingeing go then how do you comfort yourself? Right. Like that becomes the fear for a lot of people.

Lainie: Absolutely my fear. I had no idea what to replace bingeing with, and that was my mindset because there wasn't a replacement, it was confronting what I needed to confront, so.

Kirstin: Yeah. So did you believe that you would be able to stop bingeing?

Lainie: So I knew that the things that I was trying were not working for me and I knew that I believed in myself and I know that I had the desire to stop. I think it just took me such a long time to find the right resources that actually resonated with me and then caused that change. So I believed in myself and I knew I could do it, I just don't think I ever got to the point where I found that thing.

Kirstin: Yeah. So that belief kept you going, that belief caused you to not give up. And it caused you to keep trying new things and keep looking for different ways. What were some of the things that you were trying?

Lainie: Well, like I said, I had a therapist that I actually really liked, but I think it was a lot of just me going in and talking about things that I was struggling with and not figuring out why. And just talk therapy or I would Google how to stop overeating or binge eating. And it would say things like, to suppress your urge, paint your nails, or go for a walk or take a shower. And of course all of those things and more, and sometimes they worked most of the times they didn't, and it only made it more discouraging. Because I thought, well, the Internet's saying that this would help and I can't even do this, so why am I not, of course I'm not going to be able to overcome this if I can't just paint my nails. So that became discouraging as well.

Kirstin: Yeah. Painting your nails, that is the solution.

Lainie: Yeah, of course, it's as easy as that.

Kirstin: Yeah. So why do you think that you decided to reach out for coaching when you did?

Lainie: So late last year I began noticing that my bingeing was getting worse, the quantity was getting worse and then more frequent. So more often I was bingeing and I still couldn't understand the rhyme or reason. I knew there were some triggers that I had, but as I mentioned, I was seeing this therapist at the time and I started looking for additional online resources. So I had a decent commute to work and I was looking up podcast information and seeing if there was just anything I could listen to that I could relate to. I think part of my problem with the therapist I was seeing is that they had an eating disorder specialty, but I didn't feel like I was relating to somebody. And I didn't feel like I could openly talk about all of the things I was struggling with or feel vulnerable enough to do so. So I found your podcast and I had seen that you had quite a few episodes already and for about a month going to and from work, I listened to an episode and caught up.

Lainie: And one of the episodes I heard you mention coaching and I thought that would be something to try. And I remember thinking, this could be the thing that really helps me. I really, from listening to your podcast, I loved your approach, I thought you were relatable, less clinical and more, let's nip this in the bud. That's the kind of the melody I have. Like, let's get to it, let's partner together, let's be committed and get it done. And I was motivated by that.

Kirstin: Yeah. So what did you find to be the most challenging part of our work together?

Lainie: I think it has to be, this might be broad, but facing reality.

Kirstin: Yes. I think so many people can relate to that. Yes.

Lainie: Yeah. I did a lot of introspective work and this might sound cliché, but I really dug deep in my mind and my thoughts and my emotions. I remember saying so many times to you, that I wasn't a feelings person and I had to then digest all these things, no pun intended, and try to be just, as I'm growing also be patient with myself and be kind to myself and make all this change. And that is exactly what I had been avoiding for so long, I was avoiding reality [crosstalk 00:00:10:48].

Kirstin: Because again, it's uncomfortable to do that. Right?

Lainie: Oh yeah.

Kirstin: Because we never know what we're going to face. Like we'll have to go face reality and look into ourselves. What are we going to find? And people get very scared by that.

Lainie: Yeah. The unknown of what's going to be on the other side and not knowing if it's going to be better or worse or different, or it's just uncertain. And that's hard to think about and imagine, and we're look forward to.

Kirstin: Yeah. So how were you able to go through that? Very, it was uncomfortable, how did you do it?

Lainie: I was really committed after our first initial session. I think, as I was telling my story to you and sharing my history and background, I got really sad thinking about it and it didn't even sound like I was speaking about myself. It sounded like I was telling a story of someone else's life. And I remember having that phone call and just really wanting to make big change. And I think that is what drove my commitment throughout our entire process.

Kirstin: Yeah. Because you were committed in it, you were a rock star during that time. I remember you just killing it.

Lainie: Thank you. I really, I did try very hard. I tried very hard.

Kirstin: Yeah. So what do you think was the biggest shift for you?

Lainie: I'll say two things, if that's okay, so-

Kirstin: Yes, you can say two.

Lainie: The first was sitting with discomfort. So I had never done that, never thought of it. When I had the urge to binge, there was no time in between my thought and food being put into my mouth. And learning to be able to notice the discomfort, think about why I'm having it and sit with it and knowing that it will pass really changed my mentality. And I still practice that today and it's so much easier the more you do it and that was a super helpful tool for me. I think the other one was, this one was very hard to digest at first, but understanding that bingeing is a choice and that it's not something that's controlling me. So I remember so many times saying to you or to my husband, really the only two people on earth that knew I was struggling with this, that I just feel like it's latching onto my brain and it's just making me move my muscles to go to the cabinet or to the refrigerator and to make these choices.

Lainie: And I just have no say in this and it is up to whatever my brain is telling me. And that is just so far from the truth. I really was in able to find out that I was making every decision and choice and I was choosing to binge, which I know sounds so basic, but the mental shift I had to make.

Kirstin: Yes. Yeah. Because if it's not your choice, if you really are out of control, then there's really not much you can do about it. Right? And once you take responsibility for what you're doing, then you can make that change. Right? That's when the change happens.

Lainie: I think I used that phrase, it's controlling me, as almost a safety blanket to again, separate myself from reality of, well, if it's controlling me, then I have no option it's just going to happen. But

when I took ownership of it and I realized that I was the one choosing to do it and making those actions, I felt more accountable and responsible to myself to change it.

Kirstin: Yes. So you and I stopped working together in December. So we're talking now mid June, it's been about six months. So what has it been like doing this work on your own since then?

Lainie: Awesome. So I'm smiling as I'm saying this, but I'm really doing great and it's hard, I can't believe I'm saying it because I felt at one point, like I was just such a lost cause and that this was just going to be something that was part of my history and part of my life and I'd have to work around it. And just I was building my future and thinking about different jobs and having kids, this was just something I'd have to factor into that and it's not the case anymore. And the more and more I put in the work, the easier it got. I know that also sounds cliché, but one of the goals I know that I had set for my program or my overarching goal was, I didn't want bingeing to be at the front of my mind all the time. There were so many points in my day where I was not focused on anything I was doing because I was thinking about food and when my next binge was going to be.

Lainie: And truthfully, the idea of bingeing is now so far back in my head, it's not an option, it doesn't even come up as a solution, quote unquote, to a problem that I'm having and it's awesome. I think the tools that I've learned I use, sometimes some help more than others and it's been great.

Kirstin: Yeah. I love that. So is your eating perfect now?

Lainie: No, it's not perfect. I don't think that exists.

Kirstin: I don't either. And I wanted to ask you that just to put it out there for everybody else that you can stop bingeing, love the way you're eating and still not be perfect. Because we're not going to be, that's not the goal, right?

Lainie: It's not the goal at all.

Kirstin: No. So when you are having those moments of not being perfect, how do you handle that?

Lainie: It used to be a mental block for me and now I see it as an opportunity, if that makes sense. I'm really comfortable in knowing or being self aware of my actions and things I know that maybe I want to work on. And I think I am comfortable with knowing I'm just this work in progress. And even then it won't get to perfect, but I think everybody has things they want to improve on and just reaching your goals.

Kirstin: Yeah. So one thing you wanted was to lose weight, right? You wanted to lose weight and as everybody probably knows my take on that is that we work on the bingeing first and the weight loss second. So what was it like for you to put the weight loss on the back burner and just focus on bingeing?

Lainie: Oh, it was awful at first. When we were working together it was awful because I, well, the reason why I wanted to lose weight was because I was bingeing so much and I thought that I needed to balance that out with restricting or doing any whatever to not have my weight go up. And so when that mental shift happened of, okay, we have to focus on the bingeing first and weight will come second. I did focus on that, it was still hard, but I did do that.

Kirstin: So did you lose the weight?

Lainie: I don't think I've lost weight. No, but I don't care.

Kirstin: Oh, I love that.

Lainie: Honestly, I just feel so good in my body because I'm making such good choices and I don't feel horrible all the time and I feel confident. And it's been such a relief.

Kirstin: Yeah. How did you feel about your body before?

Lainie: Well, you're going to laugh. I always used to describe it as this word puffy. Like I'm not this

person who you're going to walk past and say, wow, she really has an issue, she needs to stop binge eating, whatever. But it was the behind the scenes, weight of the world of, you know what you were doing and it was sad and you didn't want to deal with that anymore. So yeah, I was not happy with my body before I was, but I was also not treating it well.

Kirstin: Right. Yeah. I love that. You don't even care anymore about the weight loss because you're so happy with your body. You no longer describe it as puffy. Right?

Lainie: I don't describe it as puffy, I really don't.

Kirstin: How do you describe it?

Lainie: How do I? I can't think of a descriptive word, but I'm just, I'm so proud of myself. I really am. I don't say that about a ton of things I am just really proud of myself. It wasn't easy and I put in the work and I'm just reaping the benefits and it's awesome.

Kirstin: Yes. So how do you think that your relationship with yourself has changed?

Lainie: I am so kind to myself now. We had one session I remember specifically where we had talked about this idea of not striving to perfection and work in progress. And really just, I had never been that vulnerable with myself, I'd always been so hard on myself when it came to my body and food and how I treated it. And once I started improving the binge eating behaviors, everything else fell into place very naturally. Because when you're hurting your body in one way, it impacts everything else. So when I was able to help fix and remove the binge eating, my life evened out and balanced.

Kirstin: Yeah. What's life like now, compared to what it was like before?

Lainie: It's, in terms of binge eating or just?

Kirstin: In terms of all of the things.

Lainie: There are constant thoughts about food or eating or what I ate or what I'm about to eat, or if I'm going to feel good or bad that day, or if something that happens is going to impact how I feel, that used to get me spiraling really quickly. And I feel like using that word control again, I'm just so in the driver's seat of my decisions, my day to day, my happiness. I think the benefit that maybe people don't even know about working with you is that, of course, all of what you teach is applied to binge-eating, but so many other areas of your life, because it's all interconnected and they all work together. And there were really strong lessons that you taught me about how to deal with issues I was having with my family and at work and conquering some of those scenarios that ultimately tied to my binge eating. And it has again balanced out how I live and I just feel more calm and confident.

Kirstin: Did you ever think you would be here?

Lainie: No. This is like the world's biggest reality shock that I'm talking to you, because I just feel like I was listening to your podcast one day on the train going to work and now I'm being interviewed as a success story on your podcast. That is just mind boggling to me and I honestly could cry. I'm so proud. I just, I am so thankful for you.

Kirstin: Oh my gosh. I'm so proud of, God, we're going to sit here and just start crying. So what would you say to somebody else who has been bingeing for a decade, is doing it several times a week and has lots of doubts about whether they'll be able to stop too?

Lainie: I think that everyone would be able, everybody is able to stop binge-eating. I know that is fact, if you are struggling with binge-eating, you can stop. And I think the most important thing is you have to have that want and desire to stop. So there are a few times in the past decade where I knew I needed to change, but I had no desire to, or I didn't want to, because I was just so comfortable having this struggle or this release as I used to call it, and things just got worse. And it never got better and it compiled and it got to the point where I knew that I needed to do the change. So for people who are on the fence or have tried a lot of different things or feel hopeless, I think if you have that desire to want to

stop binge-eating you can absolutely do it. I have no doubt.

Kirstin: I don't have any doubt either. And I'm so glad that you said that because people really need to hear it over and over from as many people as possible, right? Because you didn't think that you could, and now here you are.

Lainie: I did not think I could.

Kirstin: Yeah. And you have to have that belief to do it. Because if you were just sitting in there, listening to me on the podcast and thinking, well, that sounds great that Kirstin did it, but not me, I can't do it. You never would have reached out, ever.

Lainie: No. And one exercise that you and I did was just thinking about what is the perfect future look like without binge eating? What is that day to day look like? How are you feeling? What are your emotions, your reactions to things? And I think if you can sit and do that exercise and think about that and you get excited by that, make it happen.

Kirstin: Yes. Because you have to be more excited about your life without binge-eating than you are with your life with binge eating.

Lainie: So much better.

Kirstin: Right? Like you said, you just get so comfortable and you're like, well, I mean, what else is there? There's so much there.

Lainie: There's so much. It is so freeing, it's wonderful. You have so much more mind space to just celebrate whatever you want to do in life.

Kirstin: Yes. So anything else, any parting words, any words of wisdom that we haven't talked about that you would like to share?

Lainie: God, I hope this isn't a shameless plug, but I just really want people to work with you, I really do. It is just do yourself the world's biggest favor and change your life and just don't hesitate and do it.

Kirstin: I have to add in here, I did not tell her to say that she's not getting paid to say that.

Lainie: I'm not. And I swear, if I were a listener right now, listening to me say this, I would maybe, in a few months ago or half a year ago, I would maybe roll my eyes and say, Oh good for her, like you said, sounds like it worked. Take the step, there is nothing, there's no risk to it. Worst case scenario, you spend weeks talking to Kirstin and having the time of your life. She's so wonderful, so. And best case scenario, which will happen is you overcome something you've been struggling with for a long time and you make an awesome future for yourself.

Kirstin: Yes. And we did have fun, right?

Lainie: We had a lot of fun. I also, here's one thing I would add to, for people who say they don't have time, I used to have sessions with Kirstin over the phone in the winter in Chicago. Where I would walk around the block because I was too embarrassed to be having these phone conversations in my office. So if I can put on my long parka and walk around the block and talk to Kirstin on the phone and winter, you could find the time I promise.

Kirstin: Yes, right. When things are really important to you, you make it work. You make it work somehow. You show up for yourself when things are really important.

Lainie: Yeah. And still be doing yourself such a favor, you'll be doing everyone else in your life a favor, because they'll know this. I've been a better wife, I've been a better sister, I've been a better daughter because I don't struggle with this anymore.

Kirstin: Yes. Well, tell your husband that he's welcome.

Lainie: He'd love to hear that. He would say thank you to you. We talk about you all the time.

Kirstin: It's like I'm part of the family.

Lainie: You are.

Kirstin: Oh my gosh. I love it. Well, thank you so much for being here, for sharing your story. I think that people out there will really relate to what you've talked about here. And I hope that the people that are listening and questioning themselves, hear it and feel inspired by you. I mean, I feel inspired by you. I'm not even in this position and I'm like, Oh my God, I want to be Lainie.

Lainie: I'm inspired by me and I'm just me.

Kirstin: Oh my gosh. I love it. Well, thank you. Thank you so much. It's been so awesome talking with you.

Lainie: Thank you so much. I really appreciate it.

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Isn't she awesome? I love her so much.

Now, if you're ready to make your story sound a lot like Lainie's and to find the success that she has then you have to join my group coaching program.

To see if the program is a good fit for you and to get all the details, information, and get all your questions about it answered, go to coachkir.com/mini and request a free mini session. That free call is where your success begins. Do it. Stop waiting to live your best life. Let's create your best life together!

I'll talk to you soon, bye bye!