

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #111: Being Too Busy to Binge

Hi! You busy? If you are, good for you for taking time to listen to this episode!

Over the years, I've talked to so many people who have told me about the periods of time when they don't binge.

I talked back in episode #108 about how more desirable circumstances can help a person to not binge and something else that I hear come up often is that people find they don't binge when they're busy as well.

What ends up happening is that you're go, go, go and so focused on work or other life things that you don't even have time to think about food.

Your mind is elsewhere.

It's becomes easy to not binge or eat when you're not hungry or overdo it on snacks because there really just isn't any time for it.

The times when you'd normally binge just aren't showing up.

Maybe you used to binge after work but you've been working longer hours or have had things to do after work.

Maybe you usually binge at some point when you're alone and bored on the weekends but your weekends have been full fun stuff and errands.

The time just isn't there and neither are the thoughts.

It's easy to not think about food so you do well when you're busy.

When this happens, it can be awesome, especially if the busyness is coming from doing things you really enjoy doing.

You get to do fun things and not binge. What's better than that?

After experiencing this, I've had people tell me that they think they just need to keep busy and they'll not binge. That's their solution.

But tell me, is that really the life you want to be living? A life where you're always busy and doing things and you never give yourself downtime and time to yourself?

Really think about what that would look like.

To me, that sounds exhausting. I wouldn't be able to keep that up, nor would I want to.

I treasure my downtime. I prioritize it. When I'm making my work schedule, I make sure to give myself a minimum amount of downtime at the end of the day before I go to bed. Even on weekends, when I'm out doing stuff, alone or with people, I do my best to give myself some downtime between getting home and going to bed. That time to decompress and relax my mind helps me to not only wind down so I can get to sleep but also to be productive and alert the next day.

Then there's also extended downtime, vacations. There were so many years when I didn't take vacations. I told myself I couldn't afford to take the time off since I didn't get paid vacations at pretty much any job I ever worked. I'd go a few years without taking time off. It wasn't good for me, my mental health and my well-being. I'd get so mentally exhausted, hate my life and my job, and eating would be my escape from all of it. Instead of taking a legit, real vacation, I'd spend a day eating.

That's what can happen if you don't make time for yourself. It back fires.

A lot of people who binge started doing it because it was a backfire of an overly restrictive diet, myself included. After under eating for awhile, your brain eventually urges you to eat a lot of food and the bingeing begins. That overly restrictive way of eating isn't sustainable.

Neither is being busy all the time. It's not sustainable.

It's not doable for the rest of your life nor is it healthy.

Our bodies need to relax and refresh.

You know like when your computer or phone is acting wonky and your solution is to shut it down and restart it?

That's you too sometimes.

If I feel myself not feeling like myself and not acting like myself, I know it's time for a reset. It's time

to take a break and not do anything mentally taxing or physically demanding.

We're not meant to be busy all the time. I think it's important to find that balance between busyness and relaxation.

So let's not expect that to be answer to you stopping bingeing, especially since it might backfire into a lot of bingeing once the busyness is over and you're exhausted.

Sometimes you're going to be alone, with nothing that's urgent to do and nothing that's important to think about and you'll be just you, with your thoughts, and sometimes those thoughts are going to be about food.

You can try to distract with something, but again, that's not a reliable solution.

You can go for a walk or take a bath or call a friend but the urge to binge might just come along with you. Thoughts about food might just stay with you.

It doesn't always make them go away.

And sometimes distracting isn't even an option. If you're at work and you have some downtime, you might not be able to leave and do one of your distraction techniques. So what then?

So again, having things to do to keep you busy and that keep your mind off of bingeing can be great when it happens, but we can't rely on it as a long-term solution.

The problem isn't that you have too much time on your hands, you could have all the time in the world and still not binge. The problem is your reaction to your thoughts and feelings about food or about things in your life that bother you that you want to escape from. So the solution isn't giving yourself less time to think so you can avoid all of it, it's to react differently and actually, giving yourself more time to think about all of it so you can work through it.

You have to stop avoiding and face your problems.

Seriously, any problem in life, big or small. That pile of bills and all the emails that need to be responded to aren't just going to magically go away if you ignore them. You have to go through them and handle them if you want them to be done.

Your debt isn't just going to go away if you avoiding looking at it. Come up with a plan to create more money in your life, sell things, provide more value in your work, ask for help, find a new career.

Your bingeing needs to be faced as well.

Now, do some people just happen to stop binge eating one day after not thinking about it for awhile because they've been so busy? Sure, but they're the lucky ones. Or maybe they're the ones who weren't doing it that often or were doing it for specific reasons that are not longer an issue, I don't know, people have different stories and triggers. But please don't rely on that method, especially if you've tried and it hasn't worked for you long-term. Please please please, anything that hasn't worked for you long-term, stop trying it, it doesn't work, or figure out why it's not working and try it a new way, or ask for help so you can figure out how to make it work. Or try something completely new.

Be proactive in your success. Don't just wait around hoping it will just happen, make it happen. Do the work to make it happen.

Learn to be with your thoughts and feelings about bingeing, about food and eating, about the problems and circumstances in your life.

Look at them, understand them, question the thoughts, allow the feelings, be with yourself.

Stop avoiding by being overly busy and start spending more time relaxing with your thoughts and feelings.

Work with the real solution to your problem.

Go do it and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye!