

# **THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST**

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #15: Stopping Brain Chatter about Food

Hi! Here we are again! Me talking to you and you enjoying every second of it! And I hope you're excited because I got a good one for you today. I'm talking about brain chatter about food. So many thoughts about food and eating and we're going to make it stop already.

It is such a waste of brain space and mental energy.

So many times I can say I've sat there on my couch debating whether or not I'm going to go to the store to get food. Or go to my kitchen and get food. Or get food delivered.

Or so many times I'd be with my friends and instead of engaging in conversation, I'd be going back and forth in my head about whether or not I'm going to eat after I leave them and where I can get food and what I want.

Too much thinking about food.

My clients tell me they think about food too much too and they'd much rather spend their time thinking about more important things.

And I get it, so did I.

I had other goals and projects I wanted to think about, or conversations with friends I wanted to think about in the moment, but instead of thinking about them and putting my focus on them, it was all on food.

It made my friend-time and my me-time way less fun.

So why do we do it?

Well, first of all, let's be realistic here, you're going to think about food. We eat however many times a day to fuel our bodies and it's totally normal to eat just for pleasure sometimes too so food thoughts are going to happen.

But it becomes a problem when they start consuming you.

It's mostly thoughts like, "When am I going to eat?" "What am I going to eat?" "How much am I going to eat?"

And when you're feeling an urge or a craving it's, "Do I give in or don't I?"

So many questions and the problem is that most people don't even realize what they're doing.

They're asking themselves questions and not answering them so then what happens? They come back.

It's like when a toddler asks you a question. If you don't answer it, they're not going to be satisfied until you do.

They need to know the answer!

Your brain want questions to be answered too and if you don't do it, then it's just going to keep bringing them back until you do.

So if you don't answer them, you just exist in indecision and waste so much time there.

Then if it's not questions plaguing you, it's just the thought of a particular food just keeps popping into your head. You just keep hearing, "brownies."

The thought of brownies won't go away and I'd say the two main reasons why is because #1 you're entertaining the idea that you're might actually eat one and keeping that option open instead of shutting it down, and #2 because you're getting upset that you keep thinking about them.

But why is it such a big deal that you're thinking about that food? And why is it such a big deal that your brain keeps asking you questions?

They're just thoughts and just questions. Totally harmless. They're just sentences in your mind and nothing to get all worked up about. Really.

If your brain asks when you're going to shower, is that a big deal? Or if you keep thinking about taking a shower, is that a big deal?

The thing is, is that you probably don't mind all the shower talk, you think that's fine, but do not at all want to be thinking those food thoughts. But again, food thoughts are going to happen, food is part of daily life, multiple times, and what you choose to do with those thoughts can either make them super annoying or just, whatever.

So what if you just made a decision? And then did what you decided?

When are you going to eat? What are you going to eat? And how much?

Why not just decide right now and be done with it? End the madness!

Answer your questions and make the decision. Right now. Don't wait any longer! Your'e going to eat around 1, that's when you're most likely going to be hungry, you're going to eat chicken and sauteed vegetables with rice, and you're going to eat just that and nothing more.

Questions answered, decision made. So now if the question comes back up, you can just remind yourself of what you decided and move on.

Now, when it comes to making decisions in general, I think it's a best practice to make your decisions as far ahead of time as you can – when you're in a clean emotional space, feeling motivated and clear, rather than when you're in the moment feeling tired, stressed, or unmotivated, or when you're feeling cravings and urges.

Right now, make your decision for what you're going to do when you feel and urge or a craving. Don't just wait until it happens and then wing it. What are you going to think about when you feel it? Because what you'll think is the most important thing to plan in this situation. Decide now and then this decision is non-negotiable when it happens. Make a plan, remind yourself often, and then stick to it.

Then when it comes to food and all those questions about what, when, and how much you're going to eat, the more planning you can do, the better.

For meals, I say plan it all at least the day before if you can. Know exactly what you're going to eat for the whole day so you don't even have to think about it. Take all those decisions you usually make throughout the day and make all of them in a matter of minutes ahead of time. No more questioning everything, you already know! What am I going to have for lunch? No need to obsess or worry about it, I already decided this yesterday!

Then you have your joy foods. What's a joy food you ask? Well, there's two types of food, and they're not good food and bad food, they're fuel and joy.

A joy food is anything that is eaten for pure enjoyment. It most likely doesn't have much nutritional value but tastes de-licious.

And here's what I recommend with your joy foods.

Have no more than one a day, in an amount you feel good about, and plan those ahead of time too. Preferably at least 24 hours in advance and here's why.

If you're making a conscious, planned decision to eat it while you're in a clean emotional space, then you will have much less regret and guilt about it. You're not reacting to feelings, urges, desires, and cravings, you've made a conscious decision to eat it and for reasons that you like, not reasons like, “It was there” or “I just wanted it.”

You know you're going to a birthday party on Sunday, you decide now that you're going to eat one piece of cake, because you really like cake, you think one piece will be the perfect amount, and you want to enjoy it with everyone. So you're there and it's cake time and there is no questioning it and there's no feeling badly about it. And you better savor the crap out of it. Don't set yourself up for food amnesia by scarfing it down too quickly or not paying attention to it. Joy foods are meant to be enjoyed, so make sure you do it.

And planning your joy foods ahead of time will also help with those random, recurring thoughts about brownies I talked about earlier. Your brain says, “Brownies” and you get to then say, “Not today, I have a different joy food planned.” And then you can plan to have brownies another day. So you're not

saying, “no, never, I can't have brownies,” which as we know leads to feeling restricted and deprived and sets you up for a binge later, you're just acknowledging your decision you already made for you to have something else and then deciding when you're going to have that brownie you want. Maybe it's tomorrow, maybe it's a week from now, it's totally up to you depending on how often you want to be eating joy foods.

You don't have to eliminate joy foods from your life. Again, that's going to lead you down the path to a binge on those exact foods. So make room for them in your life in a planned, conscious way.

Decisions ahead of time. They're going to save you from so much mental food chatter and they'll help you feel good about eating joy foods.

But once you've made those decisions, then comes the most important part, and also the hardest part.

You know what you're going to think when you feel an urge, you've decided what you're going to eat for meals and you've planned what joy foods you're going to eat.

Now you have to stick to that decision.

You have to do what you said you were going to do.

So often we don't and what does this do? It makes us lose trust in ourselves and weakens our relationship with ourselves.

Just like if someone else kept not doing what they said they would, you'd stop trusting them too and your relationship would suffer.

It's time for you to start honoring your own commitments to yourself. To not go back on your word to yourself no matter what.

You don't feel like it? Too bad. Are you going to back out of your commitment to drive your friend to the airport at 5am the morning of because you're tired and don't feel like it? Heck no! You go and do it anyway because you're a good friend.

Be a good friend to yourself, even if you don't feel like it.

What also happens when you don't honor your decisions you made ahead of time is that you create even *more* decisions!

Now you're deciding whether to go with your original decision or make a new one and going back and forth about it creating more unnecessary, unwanted brain chatter!

Stop the nonsense and don't do that to yourself.

Making decisions ahead of time is one of the best things you can do for yourself.

You're going to have to make a decision at some point anyway, so why not just do it ASAP and get it out of the way.

Don't let your eating questions swirl around in your head. Answer them and move on.

Make realistic plans for yourself that you like when you're making them and that you'll want to follow through on when the time comes.

And most importantly, honor your commitments instead of going back on your word. Do things you've committed to for yourself, even if you don't feel like it in the moment, because you know it's what you really want to do.

Now go take a few moments to make some decisions for yourself. And remember, you're always just one decision away. One decision away from not giving in to an urge, one decision away from stopping eating, one decision away from thinking a thought that will make you feel acceptance of yourself. So be clear about what decisions you want to be making and my goodness, please don't make your decision be indecision!

Alright, have a wonderfully, decisive week and if you haven't subscribed to this podcast yet, then make sure you do so you never miss an episode! Bye bye!