

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #17: Handling Food Events

Hi! How are you? For all my American listeners, I hope you had a wonderful Thanksgiving last week. For all my non-Americans, well I hope you had a wonderful regular week! I would tell you how my Thanksgiving went but I'm actually recording this the week before so I don't know yet!

But I hope you did well with your food thoughts and food pushers as I talked about in the last couple episodes and I hope you're getting ready for what's to come.

Holiday season is officially upon us, and I say officially because I know some of you out there have already been in the spirit since Halloween ended! And with that as well all know comes the food, parties, celebrations, and of course the holidays themselves.

Like I talked about last time, the issues we find ourselves dealing with during the holidays show up all year round but it's like they're all intensified during this last month or so of the year. So what I'm talking about today will be beneficial for you to learn and take with you for any food event you find yourself invited to, or any food event you host yourself.

What happens for a lot of people that have food issues, who binge eat, is that they freak out so much about impending events, parties, celebrations and holidays that they just want to skip the whole thing.

But what happens if you are able to skip it, and you do skip it, is that you just end up going to a different party at home – a pity party.

You feel sad because you think you're missing out, you feel angry because you think it's all not fair, and you feel regretful because you wish you had gone. And the worst thing that sometimes happens? You end up eating more food than you would have if you'd gone, but while alone, and you end up creating more negative feelings for yourself like guilt or shame.

Problem made worse, and it could have all been avoided if you'd just gone. Or could it have?

Because what would have happened if you did go? You've had many events, holidays, celebrations and

parties and your behavior has probably been similar most every time. So you're afraid that it's just going to be the same thing again.

These events that have food available can be triggering.

What usually happens is either you don't eat while you're there and end up bingeing after you leave or you kind of start your binge while you're there with a bunch of grazing and it goes into full force once you leave.

Some people tell me they don't eat while they're there because they don't want to be judged or seen by others. So they resist their desire to eat and their urges the whole time and as they do, those feelings build up inside and once they leave they're off on their own to find something to binge on.

Others, and this was me most of the time, do eat, and hang around the food and graze all night and can't keep their mind off the food. Then the food thoughts and the wanting more don't stop once they leave. They're in it and they go find something else to eat on the way home or take leftovers and eat them immediately or eat whatever they have at home once they get home. So in this case, the eating begins at the event and puts them on a downward path and it's hard to stop once the momentum has begun.

There's this never-ending thought loop about food, and feelings building up inside you, and this all may start even before you get there.

Do you ever worry for days or weeks about what's going to happen at an event? Do you worry about what you're going to eat? What they're going to have for food? And of course whether it's going to lead to a binge or days of bingeing?

I used to for sure. Then the day before or the day of, ugh. So much worry, so many thoughts, so much nervousness. And all those thoughts and feelings before might even have lead me to binge before the event even came!

I can think of so many times that I'd done that. I knew I'd be drinking and eating at a party or whatever it was and I'd feel so nervous about it that I'd find myself eating to calm myself down beforehand. So many times that I would binge the day or night before a thing was happening.

Or maybe it wasn't even my fear of the food and drinks, but maybe about who was going to be there, what we're going to talk about, or whether I was going to be bored. Let me tell you, these are not useful things to worry about and the truth is here, there is actually nothing that is useful to worry about.

Worry is useless. It does not make anything better, it doesn't fix anything, it doesn't prepare you, it just makes you feel bad and drives you nuts.

You know what's a much more productive and positive thing to do instead of worrying?

Planning. Making decisions ahead of time.

When I talk about planning for events, you may think that there's only so much you can plan for or maybe nothing you can plan for. You really don't know what food will be there or what's going to happen.

And this is true, you don't. But there is still planning you can do that will set you up for success.

The most important planning you can do is for what you will choose to think about when you're there.

If you go into these situations feeling nervous, worrisome, anxious, fearful, and urgey then it's going to be more difficult for you to behave in the way you truly want to.

So to not feel these ways, you have to think thoughts that *won't* create them.

Decide what thoughts you want to be thinking before you go, while you're there, and when you leave that will keep you feeling empowered, in control, calm and motivated.

The more you manage your mind, the more you manage your own thinking and think on purpose thoughts you want to be thinking that will serve you in these situations, the less crazy you'll feel before, during, and after.

We get so caught up in worrying about we're going to *do*, but that's not where your focus should be. You always want to be prepared with a thought plan.

If your thoughts are in the right place, then your feelings and actions will be too.

Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't have an eating plan too, for sure have one, but an eating plan without a thought plan isn't going to be useful. If you go in with an unmanaged mind, then you'll most likely be thinking all kinds of desire, guilt, and deprivation inducing thoughts that will lead to eating. "I want that," "I shouldn't have eaten that," "It's not fair I can't have that." Or you'll be thinking these thoughts, and feeling desire, guilt, and deprivation and resist the food which is so exhausting and usually leads to you giving up and giving in.

So figure out those thoughts you want to be thinking and then you can figure out how you want to eat.

Do you want to do your best to eat healthy with the options you're given or just go all out and eat everything? How many desserts or appetizers do you want to have? If it's a meal, what do you want your plate to look like? Then when you get there you can scan your options and fit them into this loose plan you created for yourself ahead of time.

Say you decide ahead that you're going to have two desserts. Cool. Then you're there and there are 5 options. Which two do you want the most? Pick, eat, enjoy, and don't second guess your decision. Don't make it any more complicated than that.

And make sure you really like the food you're eating. Check in with yourself. Ask yourself if you like it and if you don't, drop it. Or throw it away. Only eat foods you like because seriously, what's the point of eating anything you don't?

I remember a couple weeks ago I got a brownie with M&M's on top at a festival I went to. I love brownies with M&M's! But not this one. I gave up after two bites, put it down and didn't look back. I wasn't enjoying it so there was no point. I had chosen two desserts so I just got my pleasure from the cookie I chose because that was actually really good. I wasn't missing out on anything by not eating that brownie, except for maybe the regret I would have felt for having eaten something that was not worth eating.

Another tip for you, don't hang out near the food. Just don't. Why would you do that? Unless someone you really want to talk to is there, there is no need. All it's going to do is torture you. Go socialize instead. Talk with people. Ask them about their lives and tell them about yours. That's why you're really there, isn't it? To be with the people? Then be with them.

And don't forget to incorporate what you learned in episodes 15 and 16 as well to lessen your brain chatter and say no if people try to pressure you to eat. They'll come in real handy here. Put this all together and you'll have your thoughts in check, some real good plans, and much less uncomfortableness all around. And of course, less bingeing because if you're following your plans, and managing your thoughts and feelings, then bingeing is much less likely to happen.

I think an important thing to remember is that these parties, celebrations, holidays, dinners, and all kinds of events, although there is food there, they are really about connecting with the people you're with and enjoying yourself. It's not just about the food. The food is just a bonus. The food is just an activity. It shouldn't be your main focus and you can plan for what you're going to focus on on purpose. So what's it going to be?

Use these times as opportunities to connect with people instead of thinking about or worrying about food. I want you to not be afraid and to not avoid but instead, go in there and work on yourself. Take what you've been learning and apply it. This is an opportunity to better yourself, to do the work so you can be more skilled. Instead of worrying about what's going to happen, prepare yourself and get excited to see what happens. Get excited to learn about yourself and see what you're capable of and be curious about what you still need to work on and if you have a question about what you could do better, ask me! You can either do it on the show notes page at coachkir.com/17 or email me at info@coachkir.com. I'm not just here to talk in your ear, I'm also here to have a conversation with you. So take advantage!

Also, if there's any topic you'd like me to do an episode on, any topic you find yourself wondering about or struggling with, feel free to email me. Suggestions are always welcome! Alright, now go set yourself up for a successful holiday season and prepare for any event that has food that may come your way. And remember, you're just one decision away....have a great week!