

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #19: Avoiding Trigger Foods

Hi! How are you? Me? I'm great! And I'm so happy to be here. I hope you are too!

Today, I'm talking about avoiding trigger foods.

This is a big thing in the binge eating world. We try so hard to avoid all our trigger foods because we think if we see the food, or see or hear the food mentioned, then we'll start thinking about it, which we then think will lead to obsessing and then bingeing.

So we eliminate them from our homes and try to avoid seeing them pictured or talked about online or in real life so we don't have to deal with them.

This is so hard to do though. Your most common binge foods and foods you even just binge on sometimes are everywhere. Billboards, tv commercials, ads on the internet, pictures and videos people post on social media, in the windows of fast foods restaurants, at parties, at work, at the grocery store, or most stores these days really, they have food available in so many of them like candy at the check out, or maybe you live with people who want to have those foods around....so many places.

You can try to avoid them all you want, you can try to keep them out of your home and your life, but they're not going to disappear from the world around you.

You are eventually going to hear about and see foods you binge on.

So here's what I want to ask you. Do you want to keep living in avoidance? Do you want to keep living in fear of these foods? Because that's where you will stay if you don't deal with your thoughts about these foods and your strong desire for them.

You see the food in real life or in a picture or see it written about online and you freak out and run away.

This does not sound like a fun way to live to me.

Constantly avoiding isn't going to help you get over this fear you have. It's just going to keep you in it. It's also not going to help you learn to be around that food. And isn't that what you'd ultimately want? To be able to be around any food, even your most common binge food, and not feel triggered by it? To be around it and not obsess about it and always have the encounter end in a binge?

So then you have to face your fear. You have to understand your fear and why you're choosing to avoid instead of reconciling your relationship with that food so you can coexist.

I get it. It's scary to face your fears. It may not end well, but like I talked about last time in episode 18 about how to fail, it doesn't have to turn in to a huge deal.

That being said, it may also end really well. This is a problem I come across with people I talk to all the time. That they have such a strong belief they're holding on to that if they are exposed to one of their binge foods, that they obsess about it and they will binge on it. Like it's so cut and dry and inevitable that it will happen. It's pre-determined. But I'm telling you it's not, but as long as you hold on to that belief that that's what will happen, it sure will.

Think about it in terms of the thought model. You think you'll binge on the food when you see it, so you feel disempowered, then when you feel disempowered you give in to it and you binge on it. The problem is that you think that your thought that you will binge on that food is a fact because it's happened so many times before. But that does not make it a fact. You can't know that you will binge on it again. You can't. It's in the future and you can't know for sure, 100%, what will happen in the future.

But you can know that if you're repeating your disempowering thoughts then a binge will for sure happen because you're making yourself feel like you have no power to stop it from happening.

So what if you didn't repeat those thoughts? What if you chose to start believing something different could happen? Because it totally can. It is very likely that there has been at least one time in your life that you didn't binge on whatever food it is that you've been avoiding. And if you did it then, you can do it again.

This next time could be different than most times. I mean really, why can't it be? What if you tried something different than what you've been trying in the past? What you've been trying in the past hasn't worked for you, so you can try something different and maybe see a different result. It's possible.

First you have to know what you've been doing up until this point and what hasn't worked. What have you been doing that has lead you to see food, hear about food, think about food, eat food?

I can take some guesses here about some of the things you might be doing and if these are some of what you're doing then I highly recommend you listen to episode 14 about doing hard things and episode 15 about stopping brain chatter about food. Because maybe you're not questioning your desire for those foods, which means you're not taking a moment to consider why you don't want to eat them. You're not committing to not eating them and then following through on that commitment, most likely because it's hard to. You're not allowing yourself to feel your urges and desires without giving in to them. You're giving up too quickly, again, because it all may be too hard.

So what if you actually decided to do these things instead this time? Would you still be destined to binge on those foods? Maybe not. Maybe not and that's what I want you to see.

You're keeping yourself in fear by deciding ahead of time that you're going to binge if you hear about or see a food you binge on. But what if you decided ahead of time that maybe this time could be different? And then you actually tried something different?

I remember I used to tell myself all the time that this time could be different when I'd go to the store and buy something I'd binged on in the past. But telling myself that wasn't enough. I had no plan for how it would be. I didn't have any of the tools I have today, I didn't have anything that I've talked about on this podcast. I was just basically hoping it would all work out.

But that's not how it works. This time could be different because you're going to try something different. And I want you to start with noticing your thoughts that come up when you see or hear about your binge foods.

Get curious about what's causing your desire for them, and it's not just the sight of them. Like all feelings, the feeling of desire is caused by your thinking. So if you're looking at the food and thinking, "I want that so bad" then you're going to desire it real bad. Then get curious about why you want it so bad. Let's find out what's driving this desire.

Also, if you find that you just can't get the thought of the food out of your head, then notice what the thoughts about it are. What are you thinking about the food? Why do you want it so much?

Don't be afraid of your thoughts about those foods, be curious about them. They are what are driving you to binge on them so it's time to find out what they are and do something about them.

So I challenge you to stop avoiding. I challenge you to stand in front of one of your binge foods, look at it, and see what comes up.

Be willing to feel uncomfortable when you do this, because it's not going to be a joyride. See what it feels like to feel desire for it without satisfying the desire. Watch your thinking as you do it.

As you stand there, or sit, doesn't matter, and you're watching your thoughts and feeling that urge or desire, don't freak out. It's going to be okay. Your thoughts and feelings are harmless. They're not going to hurt you. See what happens when you just let them exist in you.

You are 100% capable of being around your trigger foods and hearing about them and seeing them and reading about them and not bingeing on them. You just haven't been managing your mind and your urges in a way that works for you yet. So start practicing doing it now. Stop avoiding and being afraid and get to work.

Start building trust in yourself.

Living in fear and avoidance is not a way to live. You can't just keep running. So slow down, pause, and start with becoming aware of what you've been doing that's been leading to the result you keep getting.

Practice being around your trigger foods without eating them. Practice hearing about and seeing your trigger foods and instead of turning off your thoughts by going and getting those foods, listen to your thoughts and be with them. You can absolutely do it. No more avoiding.

Speaking of avoiding, have you been avoiding leaving me a review on iTunes? Stop that too! I'd really appreciate it and my future listeners who want to find me just like you did would really appreciate it too. Let them know why you keep listening and why they should too. Alright my people, go face your fears, stop avoiding, write me a review, and remember that you're just one decision away....have a great week!