

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #22: When Your Eating is Good for Awhile

Hi! How are you? I'm awesome. I'm doing really good. Are you doing really good too?

That happens sometimes doesn't it? That for some reason, your eating all the sudden becomes good and you're not bingeing for awhile and it's pretty awesome and you have no idea why it's happening.

This happens a lot when we make our decision to get back on track on Monday's, the first of the month, or the first of the year and especially if this time comes after a solid run of bingeing and you've got it out of your system and the desire to do it has actually dissipated. That day comes and we're pumped to get started and feeling motivated.

Or maybe it just comes out of nowhere and you think it's because you've been too busy to think about bingeing or your life isn't as stressful or you're just feeling good all around.

I went through stretches where I wasn't bingeing and every time it happened I thought maybe I was cured. Maybe I was just done bingeing. Maybe it just went away.

But then one day I'd make that decision to go eat a bunch of food because I thought it would be fun and enjoyable and then I'd be right back in it.

A lot of the time, our mindset just happens to be in the right place. Basically what's happening is we're thinking thoughts that make us feel empowered, confident, or indifferent about food and those feelings are driving our desired actions of eating in the way we truly want to.

But then if you don't know how to maintain that way of thinking, and you slide back into your previous way of thinking, then you're going to fall right back to where you were.

Doing well is awesome, let's not deny that. But there's two things people do when they're doing well that don't serve them and could possibly lead to back to not doing well.

The first one is expecting it to all go down hill. That it's just a matter of time before it happens again.

That this is just a fluke and it's not going to last. That you always screw it up and you probably will again.

This is some seriously pessimistic thinking right here. It creates fear and doubt and drops your self-confidence. You're just waiting for the good times to be over and whenever you think this way you're one step closer to making it happen.

Even worse, if you do binge, you look at what happened as evidence that you were right. See, it knew it was too good to be true. But what's crazy is that those thoughts might be exactly what causes you to binge after doing well.

Imagine if you haven't binged in awhile and one day are feeling a little craving or urge and you think it's just a matter of time before it happens again anyway. Then what happens? That self-doubt creeps in and you figure you might as well just give in to that urge now instead of trying to work through it because you'll eventually give in anyway and there it is, it was just a matter of time. But you're the one who made that happen.

You're the one who created doubt in yourself that lead to giving in to urge.

Then there's the other side of the spectrum, the second thing people do when they're doing well.

They get cocky. They think they're cured and let their guard down.

I was guilty of this so many times it's ridiculous.

Everything is going great and you think you're done bingeing for good so you completely let your guard down and stop using any of the tools you've learned. You go to store and get a whole bag of chips, and a container of cookies because they look good too, and you think that you'll be totally fine with them now because you've been doing so well. So you just eat the chips from the bag, thinking you'll have no problem stopping, but that's not what happens. Before you know it, the chips are gone, the cookies are gone, and now you're scouring your cabinets or wanting to go back to the store to get something else.

Or maybe you don't just jump right in like that, but instead overeat a little here and a little there and think it's no problem, until it becomes one. Maybe in the beginning of the time when you started doing well you were eating exactly how you wanted to. But then you let up on yourself a little bit, and then a little bit more, and a little bit more until a little bit becomes a lot.

The example I like to use for when this happens is the hill example.

You're at the top of the hill, on top of the world, feeling great and bingeing is at the bottom. You take one step downhill one day, you overate, no big deal, but then you take another step, and another, and then you speed up a little bit with a few quick steps until you start almost running and now it's hard to stop. Before you know it you've tripped and now you're rolling down the hill until you hit the binge at the bottom.

Walking downhill a little bit isn't a problem, it's when you take too many steps too quickly and start to speed up and lose control that it becomes really hard to get back to the top of the hill where you're feeling great and on top of the world.

Feeling confident is great, feeling cocky is not. Letting go of everything you learned and thinking you're farther along than you are are not good ways to solidify good habits.

You have to make sure it's solidified and an automatic habit before you can let your guard down and stop being conscious and aware of yourself around food.

And even then, let's be honest, sometimes it still takes a conscious effort to stop eating when food tastes really good or to not eat just because you're feeling a craving or an urge. I still talk myself out of eating and make conscious efforts to stop eating. It's not nearly as difficult as it used to be, but I still take a moment to check in with myself, about what I'm thinking, what I want and don't want, how I'm feeling, and make a decision from there.

So there's two ends of the spectrum that a lot of people fall into when they're doing well. They either doubt it will last and fear the day they have another binge, or they think they're cured and can just throw caution to the wind thinking everything will be fine.

A much better place to be is somewhere in the middle. A place where you're curious about why you're doing well, and you're optimistic and determined about what's going to happen. You're optimistic about what you can do, what's possible for you, and you're determined to keep this up and do what it takes to make it happen.

So here's what it means to do that. You don't expect a binge to happen, you acknowledge that an urge to do it *could* appear and you mentally prepare for how you're going to handle it so a binge won't happen. You don't doubt your abilities to not binge if you feel an urge, you continue to remind yourself of what you know you need to do and can do if you feel one. You don't dive right into a sea of your favorite binge foods if you choose to eat them, you eat one with total mindfulness and make a plan ahead of time for how much you'll eat and honor your plan.

And most importantly, try to figure out why you're doing well.

Whenever I get on the phone with a client who's doing well, the first thing I ask them, after celebrating with them of course, is ask them why they think they're doing so well.

There's always a reason, so find out what it is. If it's because of how you've been feeling, why are you feeling that way? If it's because you haven't been thinking about food, why do you think you haven't been thinking about food? If it's because you have a goal that is very compelling, what is it? If it's because you've been utilizing the tools you've learned, then good for you!

Whatever it is, take note! This is your ticket to staying on track. This is your ticket to get back on track if you stray away from doing well. Whatever is going on right now is always available to you. Always. Sometimes it may be a little more difficult to access it, but don't think there isn't a way back. There is definitely a way but you gotta know where you're going back to.

What's working for you now could absolutely work for you again in the future. So figure out what it is! And repeat it.

If you're doing well, be proud of yourself while still preparing for what *could* come. It's not expect the worst, it's prepare for it. A binge may or may not come, but in the first few days or weeks when you're

doing well, don't let your guard down. It's easy to get excited about not bingeing for a few days or a week, but remember that you're breaking a habit and even though there's someone out there who decided it takes 21 days to break a habit, there are also some who say it takes 66 days and some who say 90. There's no one special number, there's a lot of factors that go into how long it takes and it's different for everyone and for every habit.

Even when you're good for a long time, it's still important to pay attention to what you're doing and how you're feeling. Sometimes we get this idea that “normal eaters” don't ever pay attention to what they're eating and I don't think that's true at all. Stopping when they're full is more automatic for them, but there are still some times that they have to consciously stop eating dessert or consciously stop grazing at a party.

So don't think this work of being conscious and mindful ever ends. It gets way easier and takes a lot less effort, but know that the people who are the most successful, pay attention to what they want to be successful at. They make conscious decisions about what is best for them instead of just going on autopilot and doing what their lower brain suggests they do. Do they want to just chill and watch Netflix all day because they've been working so hard the last few days? Possibly! But they make the choice not to because it's not the time to do that. Might your lower brain tell you you've been doing well for awhile so you can just ease up and eat all day? Possibly! But you can make the choice not to because it's not the time for you to do that yet.

One last thing for those of you who fall into the pessimistic category. Just because you've done well for awhile and then binged many times in the past, doesn't mean it's going to happen again. This time could be different. Remind yourself of that.

So if you're doing well, I'd love to hear why. You can go to the show notes for this episode at coachkir.com/22 and leave a comment at the bottom or if you'd prefer, you can email me at info@coachkir.com. Or if you're having a hard time figuring out why you're doing well, I can help you with that too. It's good to know these things! Okay, have a wonderfully successful week, and remember that you're just one decision away....bye bye