

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #37: What You Should and Shouldn't Do

Hi! You guys, I am so excited right now because this is the first episode I am recording in my new apartment! Heck yes! I just moved in over the weekend and I'm loving it so far. Don't you just love new adventures? I do! I've moved so many times in my life and lived in so many different homes and apartments and every time I just love the excitement that comes along with the change. So fun.

Now let's talk about you and what you should and shouldn't do, as well as what you should have and shouldn't have done.

How many times have you been in the midst of a binge and thought, "I shouldn't be doing this" but then kept on eating?

It's like you think if you acknowledge the "should" then it will stop you. But it doesn't.

Or have you ever finished a binge and thought, "I shouldn't have done that" and felt regretful? Or think about how you should be doing something else, but you're not and you don't so you feel guilty?

So many shoulds and shouldn'ts! So much you think you should do or should have done differently, and you still binge and still feel bad.

What gives?

The problem is that thinking about what you should and shouldn't do isn't going to drive you to do it or not do it. And thinking about what you should and shouldn't have done isn't going to change anything.

It's really one of those thoughts that is just thinking about doing something and not an action driving thought.

It's basically you saying, you know what's best but you want something else. Or you know better, but

you didn't do it.

When you're eating and think you shouldn't keep eating, what you're saying is that you know it's better for you if you stop a binge but you want to keep going...or you're telling yourself you can't stop.

You create this struggle between what you want and what you want to want, or what you want to do but don't think you can.

Eventually you just end up going with what you want in that moment, that immediate gratification of relieving the urge with a binge.

What you should do doesn't matter. All that matters is what you're choosing to do.

Then there's the other end of the should, where you're reflecting and thinking about what you should and shouldn't have done.

It makes sense you want to think back about what happened, and I actually always recommend you think back instead of just moving on, ignoring, and not learning anything.

But shoulding isn't the best way to reflect.

So often the only thing it accomplishes is creating feelings of guilt and regret.

You feel bad about what you did. You shouldn't have done it. You should have done something else. You did something wrong.

Or how about when you think about what you should or shouldn't do in order to appease another person, like eat food they offer so they don't feel bad, like I talked about in episode 17. And because you're doing what you think you should instead of what you want to do then you feel bad.

It's so interesting to see how sometimes doing what you think you should turns out to be a positive thing, like if you stop mid binge, and sometimes it doesn't, like if you're doing something to make someone else feel good while causing yourself to feel bad.

We all use the word should before, during, or after doing something, I use the word sometimes and you'll probably hear me say it on here, I'm pretty sure I have in past episodes. I was actually just thinking about something I should have done differently the other day about a decision I made when setting up my internet in my new apartment. Not a huge deal, but I ended up inconveniencing myself and had I chosen differently when I first made the decision, my outcome would have been different. But here's the thing. All that shoulding only caused me to feel regret. It did nothing else. It did not change the outcome. It did not change my circumstance. Therefore, not useful.

So when I'd catch myself thinking it, I'd just remind myself that I thought that what I chose was the better option at the time, now I believe differently, and it's all going to be fine. Mistakes happen and at least I'm going to have internet access.

It also happens when I'm preparing these podcasts sometimes. I'll get distracted, be doing something else, and think about how I should be working on my podcast. Funny thing though, that doesn't usually cause me to stop what I'm doing. Again, "I should..." isn't a driving thought, it's merely just an idea.

It's not until I actively tell myself I'm going to get back to it that I do.

I looked up the definition to see what should means and I found it so interesting what I saw. There were a few listed but the ones that stood out to me were “used to give advice” and “used typically when criticizing someone's actions.”

So you're making recommendations for yourself, but recommendations and advice aren't always followed. It's just advice, not the decision to follow through on it.

And when you use it after the fact, you're criticizing. Hello beating yourself up!

If you actually want to take action from what you're thinking, focus on what you want and will do instead of what you think you should do. And you gotta mean it when you think that. Don't feel reluctant or pressured, feel motivated and empowered.

Imagine what would happen if you thought, “I will stop eating” as opposed to, “I should stop eating.” Or “I don't want to eat that” as opposed to “I shouldn't eat that,” and you honestly meant it. Such better results.

When it comes to things you should have done, here's a much more useful way to think about what happened. And I know this may be hard to wrap your brain around, but open your mind up to the possibility that this could be true.

Nothing should have happened differently. It happened as it was supposed to and you know this because it did happen.

Don't argue with what happened. Don't criticize yourself. Don't wish it had gone down differently. Accept it and if it wasn't an ideal experience, then you learn from it, not just think about what should have been different or wish you had done something else. Wishing and shoulding won't change anything. All you can do is change what you do in the future. Choose to be different then based on what you learned about your previous mistake.

And while you're at it, stop shoulding on other people too. It's like what I talked about in episode 33 about people being unsupportive. You start saying what they should and shouldn't do and they don't follow along and you get upset about it. All it does it create anger and frustration for you.

They want something different from what you want and just like you, they're more inclined to do what they want rather than what you think they should. You expect them to do what you think they should but let's be real here. You don't always do what you should, do you? So we can't expect perfect compliance from them either. Especially since they may disagree with you about what should and shouldn't happen.

If you notice yourself thinking about or saying the “S” word, take a pause and think about what you're saying. What you should do doesn't really matter. It's about what do you want to do, what will you do, and what you can learn from what you did do.

I personally think that in a perfect world, that word would go away. We'd all just do what we truly want and be okay with what we do. And again, if it was a mistake, we learn instead of beating ourselves up,

feeling guilty, getting angry or regretting.

So now that I've made this episode, I don't want you all coming after me if I ever should you. It's probably going to happen, but remember, it's just me advising you and you can still do what you want. But maybe what I'm shoulding is a good idea. Like I said, in a perfect world, it would be gone in my book, but we're not there and it's still part of all of our vocabularies, mine included, so let's all just make an attempt to be aware of it and think twice before using it against ourselves. I'll talk to you next time, bye bye!