

Hi and welcome back! Thank you for joining me again I'm so happy to have you here.

Today I'm talking about a topic that you're probably quite familiar with if you've been a part of any binge eating communities or have read anything about binge eating, and it's food restriction.

For a lot of people, restricting food is what originally caused their binge eating behavior. It's what caused them to start feeling urges. You go on a restrictive diet to try and lose weight and then find yourself rebelling against that diet and eating all the foods you restricted and in large amounts because you tell yourself this is just a one time thing and you won't be eating those foods again.

Sound familiar?

This isn't the case for everyone, as I've mentioned before, some people develop their bingeing just by creating a habit of eating too much food until it becomes a seemingly uncontrollable habit, but a lot of the time bingeing begins after going through a restrictive diet.

This is what happened to me.

Like I talked about in episode one, I lost 40 lbs back in college in what I thought was the right way. I'd learned about calories and how much I should be eating and I followed the tons of advice I'd gathered in the magazines I was reading.

I chose my calorie goal, was very strict with it, and I lost all the weight I'd intended to.

I then did pretty well afterward for awhile, but overeating slowly crept in. A little extra here and a little extra there.

See, the problem was that I had unhealthy eating habits for my entire life before I lost that weight. What I was able to do was push them aside while I was losing the weight but after it was done, I was back to my old ways, but worse.

I still had the desire to overeat which then turned into a really strong desire to binge.

When the bingeing began, I got scared.

I had worked so hard to lose that weight, I did not want to go back.

So if I'd binge, then the next day I'd make sure to eat less.

For years I was living this way. I'd binge and then try to make up for it.

Eat too much one day, eat not enough the next. It would balance itself out, right?

Yeah, not so much.

It made the problem worse.

And unfortunately, over time I ended up gaining most of my weight back because of my bingeing.

So I was back in weight loss mode but this time it was much harder than when I'd lost that weight in college because I was now battling bingeing.

I'd be able to eat healthy for a few days and then I'd feel that urge to binge. So I'd binge on something that I wouldn't normally eat, something off limits, because that was what I was craving so badly and I'd tell myself I wouldn't be eating this again for a long time...probably until I hit my goal weight.

This made matters worse, telling myself that I couldn't eat this food after today, that I had to get my full fix right now, because to me this meant I had to eat a ton of it and enjoy it while I could.

This way I was trying to eat in order to lose weight, and the rules I set for myself, involved me making foods off limits until I got to my goal weight. The joke was on me though because as long as I lived that way, I'd never get to my goal.

For you, no matter which path you started down, whether you began with restricting or slowly created an overeating habit that turned into bingeing, there's a strong chance that you're restricting now.

Like I was, you're probably bingeing and then restricting yourself in order to make up for what you've done and then bingeing because you restricted and it goes on and on.

You're perpetuating the binge/restrict cycle and making it very difficult for you to stop bingeing.

Most likely you're doing this because you think that if you don't restrict after a binge then you'll gain weight. But here's the thing about that. Right now you're probably bingeing and restricting and your weight is either going up or doing all kinds of fluctuating. Clearly, restricting isn't the solution. Restricting is not what will balance out your weight after a binge. What it will do is cause another binge.

If the day after you binge you decide to eat very little food, you'll most likely be super hungry by the end of the day. You're not giving your body the food it wants so it's going to keep signaling you for more.

Then if you still don't give it that food, your brain gets scared. Your brain's number one concern is your survival. It wants you to eat properly so your body gets the fuel it needs to function well and if it thinks you're going to run out of fuel then it's going to scream at you to eat as much as you can.

That scream is the urge, which you've conditioned to happen, as I talked about in Episode 2.

Your brain starts acting like a toddler really. If a toddler wants something really badly, and you give it to them when they scream for it, then they're going to keep screaming when they really want something because they think that's how they get it.

Your brain really wants you to eat and since you keep giving into those screaming urges, then it's going to keep sending them out since it works to get it what it wants.

Your body and brain want to be properly nourished and if you don't do that, they will react with urges.

Now, there's another side to restriction and it's important to know that what determines whether you're restricting or not is not always *how much* food you're eating.

It can also be how you think about the food you're eating and not eating.

Remember in episode 3 when you learned that your thoughts cause your feelings?

Well, restricted, is a feeling. Therefore, it's caused by your thoughts about the food you're eating or not eating.

If you don't eat something, is it because you *can't* have it? Or that it's *not allowed*?

Are you eating foods because you think these are the foods you need to eat to lose weight and anything else will cause weight gain?

Look at all the unwanted boundaries created by these thoughts. I can't, I'm not allowed, I need to.

These are all going to cause a feeling of restricted within you. And then what is your reaction to feeling restricted by your food choices?

You guessed it, bingeing, rebelling.

You make foods forbidden which makes you want them even more. You force yourself to eat healthy foods you may not like that much, or follow a diet you don't enjoy just so you can lose weight and this all causes resentment.

You still want to eat ice cream, like, really badly, but you keep telling yourself no and not for good reasons. You have a thought that says eat "ice cream," this thought causes you to feel desire, but then you try to resist this desire because you're not allowing yourself to eat ice cream and the more you resist, the more you push against that desire, the stronger the desire becomes until you just can't resist it any longer.

So you finally give in and you're not just going to eat one scoop, you're going to make the most of your time eating that ice cream since you're not going to do it again. Gotta enjoy it while you can!

Then since you've already eaten that, you might as well eat other things you don't normally allow, so let's just go all in with

all the off limit foods!

So as you can see, it's not just about how much you're eating that is the determinant for whether you're restricting or not, but also how you think about the food you're eating and not eating.

So how can you stop restricting and feeling restricted?

Eat enough food. Eat until you're full and eat nutrient dense foods.

Eat foods you like. Eat foods you want to eat and give yourself permission to eat any food you want to.

Nothing should be prohibited.

You shouldn't cut foods out of your life forever if you genuinely don't want to, unless of course you have an allergy or intolerance or something.

Allow yourself to eat what you want.

You can incorporate all the foods you want into your life in whatever way you want to.

Do you want to eat a treat every day? Then go for it. But make it a good one!

Choose to eat foods *you want* to eat, not what you think you should eat in order to lose weight or to counter a binge.

I give myself permission to eat whatever I want whenever I want to. But the truth is that most of the time, I don't want to eat all the food and all the junk.

“Why the heck wouldn't you?” You may ask. “But it's all so delicious!”

Yes it is, but I don't always physically feel good after I do, and I care about how I feel. And also, and this is a big one for me because I didn't used to believe this one, but I don't need those foods. Ever. Even if I'm thinking about them, I never need them.

I don't feel urges to binge on all the foods I used to binge on because I don't create intense desire for them with my thinking anymore. There's no more “off limit” foods. Everything is allowed on my terms.

So what are your terms? You get to decide! How do you want to be eating? And I mean genuinely how do you want to be eating, not how do you think you need to eat because you binged or because you want to lose weight?

As long as you continue to think restrictively about your eating, and/or not eat properly for your body's needs, then you're going to keep creating urges within you.

If you happen to binge, don't punish yourself by taking away food.

If a binge happens in the beginning of the day, eat in the way you truly want to be eating for the rest of the day.

If a binge happens at night, eat in the way you truly want to be eating the next day.

Punishing yourself is never a good idea.

If you want to break the binge/restrict cycle, it's so important to break out of this diet mindset.

Doing this can be challenging, but it will be so worth it.

Watch out for the times when you feel restricted or are restricting and remember, you decide what you eat every day.

Decide to eat what will help you.

I know this can be a tough concept to apply so if you have any questions, head on over to the show notes and ask in the comments. You can find them at coachkir.com/4. And before you leave your podcast app, don't forget to subscribe so you don't miss an episode! Have a wonderful week and I'll talk to you next time. Bye!