THE
STOP BINGE EATING
PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #41: What You Were Taught to Believe

Hi! How are you? I hope you're amazing. I hope you're feeling great. Because I am and I want you to too! Today, we are talking about what you believe based on what you were taught.

Back in the day, someone taught you something about food and eating. They taught you something about you and your body. Was it negative? Positive? Were you built up or beaten down? Was it directly taught to you or indirectly?

Throughout our lives, and especially when we're younger, we're taught what to believe either indirectly or directly by other people and by what happens to us. It may be from parents, grandparents, siblings, friends, teachers, celebrities, I mean, pretty much anyone you have exposure to. We're also taught what to believe through commercials and advertising and on the news and on social media.

People are always expressing their beliefs and throughout your life, especially when you were younger, you've unknowingly made other people's beliefs your own. Or, you've taken what they've said and formed your own belief based on what you make what they said mean.

When we were kids, we were so much more susceptible to beliefs of others especially parents and other people who were close to us.

Children look to others to teach them what to believe and because most children are very trusting, which is why parents have to teach them not to talk to strangers because they don't know any better, they just assume what they're hearing is true.

In childhood, we were constantly learning and although kids may ask "why?" a lot, they're just being inquisitive and gathering information, they're not questioning the validity of things, they just want to know more.

When we're kids, we just believe most of what we're told. Skepticism doesn't usually kick in until later in life.

Different children begin their skepticism at different ages, of course not all kids are exactly the same with their brain development, but if you've ever interacted with a child, you've probably seen how easy it can be to mess around with them and tell them a lie and for them to believe it.

I was just reminded of the Jimmy Kimmel prank where parents tell their kids they ate all their Halloween candy. So funny, if you've never seen it, go on YouTube as soon as you finish listening to this. Perfect example of kids believing what their parents say.

It doesn't stop though once you grow up to be an adult. There is still a lot of belief sharing and belief believing.

Sometimes, depending on the belief topic, it's not so big of a deal, but when it comes to our beliefs about ourselves it can be quite damaging.

Too often, we allow other people's negative opinions about us to become our opinions about ourselves. Or, we interpret what people say to mean something negative about us and then we agree.

Your boss says you aren't good enough? Ok then, I guess she's right.

One guy you're into says you're not his type so you make it mean you're not attractive, period. Now what you assumed to be that guys opinion is now you're belief. You're not attractive and he didn't even say that.

You don't even realize it's happening, but in those situations, you're creating your own beliefs about yourself.

Now let's take it back to when you were younger and the beliefs that were instilled in you back then.

People probably said things and they may have good intentions, they were trying to help you, and it may have come from love, but when you're a kid, you may interpret it in a way that makes you feel badly about yourself or badly about what you do. Here are some examples of beliefs I've seen people hold on to that they were taught to believe.

You'll get fat if you eat that.

Boys won't like you if you're not thin.

This is just how you are and you'll be this way forever.

You're not good enough.

You need to lose weight.

You'll always be a big girl.

It's not okay to feel angry.

You shouldn't eat that.

Talk about some beliefs that you wouldn't want to have, am I right?

So there are those ones that are said directly to us, and then there are the oh so subtle beliefs that are modeled to us. People are just doing what they do and don't even realize they're teaching by doing.

You see your parent or parents struggle with food. And if you think you're like them in a lot of ways then you may think you'll always be the same way as them and therefore are destined to always struggle. You believe eating normally or maintaining your ideal weight is a struggle.

You see that overeating is normal. This is such a common one. You see others eating a lot and eating when they're not hungry and eating often and you therefore believe that this is how normal eating looks. For me, it was that dessert and snacking were normal. Having seconds was normal. I never questioned any of it for a long time.

You see that food is a reward, so that becomes your go-to reward when you do something hard or challenging.

You learn to eat to feel better. We've all done this one, right? Because it does work for a minute.

So many things we're taught to believe. How many of these were you taught? And how many of them are you still holding on to?

And are the ones you're holding on to holding you back from moving forward?

The good thing about beliefs is that they are not facts. They are just thoughts you have thought over and over and now the thoughts have turned into beliefs. You can change them. You can change what you think you can change what you believe.

You can let go of long-held beliefs that no longer serve you no matter how long you've been holding on to them.

I don't care how old you are and how long you've been believing that you're not good enough, or that you can't change, or that it's wrong to eat a cookie, you can stop believing that right now.

But first you have to know what you have been believing. This is sometimes very obvious and sometimes very tricky for two reasons. Either you're not seeing your beliefs as beliefs but as facts, which they are not. You gotta know the difference. Or, you haven't taken the time to uncover your beliefs.

I had a client just the other day who as were talking uncovered multiple beliefs that she hadn't really thought about for awhile and they showed her why she's so avoidant of feeling anxious. She never put it all together and connected it all and it was really eye opening for her to see that she's unknowingly been holding on to these beliefs and they've been negatively affecting her without her knowledge.

I like to think of our long-held beliefs that we're not aware of, the ones that are negatively affecting our

lives now, as heavy stuff at bottom of a purse. We don't know what's down there and we may not even know there is stuff down there. We just think that our purse itself is heavy or that the stuff we actually get use from is heavy. But once we unpack it all, we can finally see all that junk at the bottom that no longer serves us. Then now knowing it's not serving us, we can toss it aside and make room for stuff that *will* actually serve us and be useful to us.

What's interesting about these beliefs is that maybe at one time, they were useful. Maybe that stuff at the bottom of your purse had a purpose at one time, or you thought it did. Maybe it never did, but you were told it did. But now it definitely doesn't and you can see that by the way it affects you now.

That's what matters. Right now matters. Whatever the belief, do you believe it now? Is it serving you now?

It's so interesting when you question why you believe something you've believed for so long and you have zero evidence to support it. All you can say is, "that's what my mom always said." But what do you think now? Maybe when you were a kid you just went along with what mom said but now you're an adult and you get to question and choose.

Let's look at the example of cleaning your plate that I think we're all familiar with. Whose parent or grandparent instilled this one in them? I think for me it was my grandmother mostly from what I can remember.

This idea is something that originated back in the early 1900s, 100 years ago you guys, when food was scarce because of the limited amount of food available as a result of World War I. It was then reintroduced again after The Great Depression and World War II when food was once again scarce. During both times, elementary school children were taught to wait until meals to eat, which is a good thing in my opinion, but to also not leave any food on their plate at their meals. No wasting allowed. This made sense back then. They were trying to ration and save food and make sure everyone is understanding the value of even having food to eat.

But now, food is no longer in short supply and our plates, especially outside of our homes, are way fuller than they need to be. I used to work at a restaurant that serves ridiculous portions, probably like 3 or 4 reasonable portions per entree, and if you go there and believe it's best to clean your plate then you're in trouble. In some instances now, cleaning your plate is unhealthy and can lead you to ignoring your fullness signals and overeating for the sake of not wasting anything.

So for most people, those who aren't faced with a shortage of food, this belief does not serve them well. What would serve them well is to believe that it's okay to not clean your plate if you're full.

So what may have been a useful way of thinking way back then, is now a not so useful way.

You gotta recognize these beliefs and see how they're affecting you.

So many people don't ever take the time to look at their beliefs and see how they're affecting them now. They fail to change themselves because they're not seeing the problem as changeable or even what the problem is.

But they are changeable, what you believe is changeable. You can find the truth in what you what to believe and let go of what you now see as untrue.

So what beliefs are you still holding on to that no longer serve you? Look for them. Assess whether you want to keep them, and if not, decide what you want to believe instead and you go believe it!

Believe what will actually give you the results you want in your life, not just by default of what others believe.

Now go believe useful, self-serving beliefs on purpose and let go of all that old junk. Have a great week and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye!