

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #45: Labeling Yourself as a Binge Eater

Hi! How are you? Guess how I am. I'm great because I just love talking to you all so much!

Now I've got a question for you.

Do you label yourself as a binge eater?

I used to. Not to other people, I kept that to myself, but to myself I would.

I didn't think anything of it. I just thought I was labeling myself honestly based on my eating habits that kept happening.

I binge ate, so therefore I was a binge eater. Makes sense doesn't?

And you may think it makes sense too, to label yourself as a binge eater.

But whether or not it makes sense doesn't really matter. What matters is how you feel when you label yourself that way, what you make it mean about yourself, and what you do when you do.

Is it useful to label yourself as a binge eater?

I can't say for you whether it is or not. That's a personal opinion.

But from what I've seen from my clients who do, and from when I did, I'd say for most people it's not useful.

I've had clients who would tell me how ashamed it makes them feel. It makes them feel like they're broken or that something is wrong with them or that they're weak. It makes them feel abnormal and bad about themselves.

The words, “I’m a binge eater” in themselves are not a problem but it’s all the underlying thoughts about what that means that then causes the embarrassment and shame.

You could call yourself a binge eater and not care but for most of you who do it, you’re making it part of your identity and thinking it’s a part of you and that this is just how you are.

It’s like you’d be saying, “I’m someone who is a woman, a daughter, a whatever your job title is, and a binge eater.”

Being a binge eater may be true. You may be one. But the question is, is it useful to think of yourself that way?

You are also someone who is going to die someday. You’re someone on the path toward death. You would agree that’s true, right? But why in the world would you think about that? What is the upside?

I personally think it feels terrible to think about that. I’d rather think about how I’m someone who is living and I’m on the path toward living my best life. I want to feel optimistic, encouraged, and joyful, not scared and doomed.

So I’m going to think about it in the way that makes me feel more positively about life.

You get to think about your eating habits in the way you want to too.

When you think about yourself as being a binge eater, what happens besides feeling bad? What do you do?

Do you give up on trying? Are you just a binge eater and you’re accepting that about yourself and just continuing to live your life as one because this is just who you are?

I talk a lot about acceptance, of your body, yourself, other people, of what you did and do, but there’s a difference between accepting and condoning and I think a lot of you fall into the condoning trap.

Condoning is accepting and allowing to continue with reluctance. It’s excusing and disregarding. This is not at all the kind of acceptance I teach. I teach the kind where you agree with reality so you’re not mad about it and then you can take action to change yourself if you want.

Calling yourself a binge eater and condoning binge eating gives you a reason to give up. It’s apathetic, unmotivated, and disinterested. You lose your drive.

You think there is no way out so why bother trying?

But my goodness, if there is just one thing you take away from anything I’ve ever said on this podcast in all the episodes, please let it be that it is possible for you to change. That is hands down the most important thing. Without that belief that it’s possible, you’ll be stuck where you are forever.

So if you’re labeling yourself as a binge eater and you make that mean that this is who you are as a person, that this is inherently you, then you’re screwed.

If you believe it is permanent, then it will be. You will create that reality for yourself.

If you believe it's not, that it is possible you can find your way out, that you can make changes in your life, in your eating, in your mind, then you will find that way.

You can label yourself however you want.

Seriously. You can think about and believe anything you want about yourself. There are no limits.

So then, do you want to label yourself as a binge eater? Does that serve you?

I remember talking with a client about how she was so stuck in defining herself this way and a small shift ended up making such a big difference for her.

She decided she was not a binge eater, but someone who binge eats.

It may not seem like a big deal to you, but for her, it gave her a better feeling. And better feelings are where it's at if you want to create a better version of yourself.

It took her away from thinking binge eating was a part of her and moving it to something she just does sometimes.

We do not have to define ourselves by what we do. Do you go around saying you're a sleeper because you sleep? Or a teeth brusher because you brush your teeth? Or a social media scroller because you do it? Most likely not, because you don't use all those actions to define yourself.

So why choose to do it with this one?

It doesn't matter what you do, or what you've done, what matters is what you're believing about yourself.

You don't have to go all the way to trying to label yourself as a non-binge eater right now, but if you notice you feel bad if you do label yourself as a binge eater, find another way to acknowledge binge eating as part of your life.

It could even be as simple as why my client did where she said she's just someone who binges or you could say you're someone who has binged for awhile but you're becoming a person who doesn't or that sometimes you are a normal eater.

Give yourself some light at the end of the tunnel. Show yourself that there is a way out.

Don't halt yourself by making binge eating a part of you. It's doesn't have to be, and it's not.

Binge eating is not you and you are not it.

Labeling yourself as a binge eater is not necessary or beneficial in most cases. You can acknowledge that it's something in your life that you want to work on without feeling ashamed or embarrassed about it.

Define yourself by who you are and who you are becoming.

You may be someone who binge eats sometimes, but you're also someone who is kind, caring, loving, attentive, so many wonderful things I'm sure.

You can be whoever you want to be. You decide what your identity is. You decide what you get to think about yourself and who you think you are no matter what you do or have done or haven't done.

I like to label myself as being, amongst many other things, friendly, blunt, funny, straight forward, attentive, easy going. Why do I get to label myself with these? Not because other people tell me I am, but because this is how I choose to see myself.

There are also many negative things I could associate myself with about myself, but why bring those up? Why label myself with all the negative?

If you want to label yourself, choose labels you like, ones that don't cause you to feel ashamed when you think about them.

Have a great week, bye bye.