

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #47: Holding Yourself Accountable

Hi! Here we are again! Me and you, doing this thing together. We make quite the team, you and I, don't we?

Being part of a team can be pretty awesome. You get someone to talk things through with, come up with ideas with, and also someone to answer to.

Quite often when I ask people what they think they need to be successful with stopping their binge eating, one of the most common answers is accountability.

I totally get that too. Sometimes it's a lot easier to achieve goals and do the work when you know someone is watching you, checking in with you, and following up on what you said you'd do.

When you're on your own, it's too easy to put things off and not try so hard. You're the only one watching.

When we know someone else is holding us accountable, we start to feel like we're going to let them down if we don't do what we say. We don't want them to be disappointed and we don't want to be scolded or reprimanded.

Having someone else on your team, or even having a team, can put you in the mindset of how you're in this together and you want to show up for them.

I'm currently working with a coach, Jenn, I'm the client, in a program that I'm actually trained in through the life coach school we both got certified through. I learned, front to back, the exact same program we're working on. She's not teaching me anything I don't already know, and I mean no tools I didn't already know. She's doing an amazing job of teaching me what's holding me back personally from being successful in this area and how I can overcome my obstacles! It's been awesome. I love getting coached and I'm so glad I signed up. Anyway, I know all the things, and I'm highly skilled at self-coaching, I can coach myself quite well, but before I started working with her, I was half-assing the work on my own. I wasn't putting in enough effort, I wasn't being consistent. Now we're four weeks in and I'm seeing a huge difference in how I'm showing up. There is definitely something about knowing

I'm going to talk to her each week that keeps me in the game. I don't want to show up and tell her that I didn't do any of the work.

What's so interesting to me about this experience is that I've been wanting to do this work. This is a part of my life that I've wanted to work on for awhile, but it wasn't until I got my coach that I started to actually put in the effort necessary to make real change. Now, of course the biggest part of the changes I've made is the coaching that I'm getting. She's been pointing things out to me that I wasn't able to see on my own and pushing me to expand my mind which I freaking love, but being held accountable by having our weekly appointment is also super helpful.

I'm going to keep my commitment to her. I'm not going to cancel on her, even though we have our sessions on Tuesday evenings and maybe I'd rather be watching *The Bachelorette* which was recorded from the night before. I'm not going to not show up for her and even more than that, I'm not going to not show up for me.

I want this, I've given myself this opportunity to finally put in the necessary work, and I'm going to take advantage of this so I can move on to the next thing I want to improve about myself.

Some of you are never going to work with me. That makes me sad by the way! But it's totally fine...kinda. But seriously, you may not work with me or you may not work with anyone, and if you don't then you are going to be on your own and you won't have someone to hold you accountable. You'll have to hold yourself accountable.

You could of course have an accountability buddy, maybe a friend or someone you met in an online support group but, a problem I see happen with accountability buddies is that they may not always be as reliable as you want them to be. When you're working with a coach, you're paying them. They're obligated to show up for you. But if it's a friend, family member, or someone you met in an online group, they may not always be there for you the way you want them to be. Or, on the flip side, even though you have the buddy, you still may not show up the way you want to. More on that in a minute.

I remember working in a restaurant way back in the day where toward the end of the night, there would be french fries under the heat lamp in the kitchen. They'd just be sitting there in the food window between me as a server and the cook in the other side. It was so easy to eat them whenever I felt like it and I love french fries so it would happen more than I'd want it to.

So one day, I told this one cook to not let me eat the french fries and he agreed. Not long after, I was feeling tired and stressed and it was the end of the night and I just wanted a dang french fry so I ate one, or maybe more than one, I don't know, it was so long ago I don't remember. The cook, as I asked him to, told me not to eat fries. But I didn't care. I didn't care that he said it, that I had told him to say it, or my reasoning behind all of it. I wanted the fry and I was going to eat it.

After that, he never tried to stop me again. I also never asked anyone to stop me again because I knew that they couldn't.

At that point, neither of us were holding me accountable to my goal I set for myself. Neither of us cared, no one cared. He clearly saw it didn't matter to me anymore so it didn't matter to him anymore either. The accountability just dropped off.

Even if a person is there to supposedly hold you accountable, it won't matter if you're letting things

slide because you tell yourself it won't matter, it's fine, or you just don't care right now. Why should they care if you don't?

What I also find to be so interesting though when it comes to this topic, is how much people don't care about their own opinions of themselves. They don't want other people to think they're lazy, not dedicated, or unmotivated, God forbid they think that, but for themselves, not as big a deal. They let that happen no problem.

It's like when people say they can binge because no one is watching. Um, hello, you're watching! And your opinion of yourself if you binge is going to go way down. Doesn't that count for something?

What you need to know about having someone else hold you accountable for you reaching your goal, what really happens, is that you have thoughts about that person that cause you to feel committed or a feeling similar like determined or motivated, that then drives you to take the action you want to take.

That other person isn't really doing anything. Sure they may call you or ask you or whatever, but they are not the one who is causing you to actually do the work you said you'd do.

You're the one doing it. You're doing it not because of them but, because you're thinking about how you want to do this so you don't feel bad about telling the person you didn't do it. You don't want to feel bad. Sure you don't want them to feel bad either, but think about why you don't want them to feel bad. It's because if they do then you will too. It's still all about you.

It's always about you. You're always the one creating the accountability for yourself. You're just adding an external circumstance to the equation that doesn't even need to be there. The role of the other person in this is just something you're creating in your mind. You've given them this role that you could very well give to yourself.

Having a person holding you accountable really isn't much different than having a reminder that you put in your phone hold you accountable. If you don't do what you said in time for the person who checks in with you, then you feel bad. If you do do it then you feel good. If you don't do what you said in time for the reminder to ask you if you did, which is really you, then you feel bad. If you do then you feel good.

Other people don't magically make things happen for us. I have proof of this just from working with so many people with their binge eating. I'm there the exact same way for everyone. They're given the exact same access to me, the same homework, the same weekly sessions, and there are people who still don't fully show up.

It's not me that causes people to do the work or not. It's not me as the person holding them accountable, it's them.

I am not responsible for what they do, they are. Who ever you have ever used to hold you accountable has never been responsible for what did or didn't do, you were.

I care so deeply for the success of my clients and care so deeply that they do the work and put in the effort and apply what we coach on but me caring won't get them to do it.

They have to care. They have to see the value in it and believe they can do it and think that each

decision they make matters.

When you have someone else holding you accountable and you actually do the thing you said you were going to do, it's because you cared enough to do it. You felt determined to do it. You felt committed and driven. You, you you.

But I'd stop and question what it was you were caring about. Were you caring about yourself and achieving your goal because you had a compelling reason to do it, or were you merely just doing it to please your accountability person?

Your answer to that really matters. When I have a client who I think is just agreeing with me because I'm their coach and who I think has reservations but isn't speaking up about them, I make sure that they're going to do their homework because they want to and they see the value in it, not just because I suggested they do it.

I don't ever want anyone to do something just because they want to please me. Not just in my coaching practice but in my life everywhere. I want everyone to do what they want for reasons they like. I don't want there to be resistance or resentment because then I won't even feel good about them having done it.

You have to want to do it for you, not someone else.

If you want to show up for yourself, if you care about what you do, if you have compelling reasons to do it, then you don't even need someone else to hold you accountable.

Whatever you would expect from someone else, you do that for yourself. Set an expectation for yourself, make a plan and be specific about what you're going to do and when you're going to do it by. Dedicate time for yourself, make dates with yourself, and whatever you might think to yourself when someone else is holding you accountable, think that about yourself.

It's not, I gotta do this for my coach/friend/husband, it's I want to do this for me.

One of my favorite accountability stories of my life was back years ago with an experience I had with a manager that I had at my job at the time. I don't know if I've mentioned this on the podcast before, but I grew up dancing competitively. I also danced in college and have a bachelors degree in dance along with my psychology degree. When I was a teenager, I wanted to be a dance teacher when I grew up and maybe have my own dance studio. That didn't happen but I did become a life and eating teacher and have my own coaching business so I guess it's kinda inline. Anyway, after wanting to be a dance teacher, after college I changed my mind to having my own dance company and putting on shows. I didn't fully believe it would ever happen, but it was a dream of mine.

Then one day this manager at my job, his name was Darren, asked me what I wanted to do with my life, because he obviously knew I didn't want to work there forever. I told him about the dance company and he asked me what I did that day to make that dream come true. I told him nothing and I didn't feel good about it.

Maybe a week or so later, he asked me again, what did I do that day to make my dream come true. I again didn't have an answer but luckily someone nearby overheard and came up with a good one – that I had made money to fund it. I took that answer and went with it.

So now there I was, talking about this goal I had, that I hadn't put too much thought into, but I had someone checking in with me about it and I wanted to give him answers so I didn't have to feel like a failure if I didn't. So I did something. I spent some time at home looking on the internet for theaters in the area where I could possibly put on a show. Now I was ready with an answer for the next time he asked. I really did something! But the funny thing was, he never asked again. Never checked up on my goal, my dream, again.

Did I stop doing things to make it happen? Nope, I sure didn't. From then on, I started asking myself what I was doing to make it happen, and I was caring about it as much as I thought he did when he asked. He believed in me and now I believed in myself.

I didn't need him anymore. I cared enough, I wanted it enough, I was willing to put in the work because I knew it would be worth it. I choreographed all the dances. I rented a theater and signed a contract for 8 shows, two weekends in June. I rented a studio for auditions and set that date and invited dancers to it. I created a rehearsal schedule. I put together a fundraiser. I set goals, created deadlines, made plans, and did them all for me.

It wasn't about him anymore, not at all. By the time I started rehearsals, he wasn't even working with me anymore. He didn't even get to see the show live because he had moved away for his new job. Sure he helped me get the ball rolling, but I was the one who kept it rolling.

If it were all about him, that show probably wouldn't have happened. He could have asked me about it every day and if I wasn't creating commitment and determination within myself, it never would have happened. He can't create that for me. It's my thoughts that create my feelings, he does not have the power to do it.

Take it back to that cook at the restaurant. I didn't care enough about doing the work to not eat the fries. The cook cared about me, he wanted to help me, but since I didn't, his words didn't matter.

And it for sure isn't dependent on what's easiest because I'll tell you, not eating fries for me at that time was probably just as hard as putting on that dance show. I don't know, it's really hard to compare the two, but the thing I actually held myself accountable for, when it didn't matter to anyone but me, happened.

Having someone else hold you accountable isn't the magic ticket. I'm sure you know this already because there have to have been times when you've had someone there for you and you stopped showing up even though you knew they were there for you.

How many times have you told people you're going to lose weight so you could have accountability and then you give up?

Can it be easier to show up when you have someone watching you? Sure, but it's not impossible for you to do it on your own. It really is so very similar.

Is it easier to do my work knowing my coach Jenn is going to expect me to show up and do it when we talk on Tuesdays? Yes, but the truth is, I want to do it. I consider her time and effort and I don't want to waste either for her, but mostly it's about me. I don't want to waste my time and effort either. I do the work for me, not for her.

You've held others accountable. How have you done it? Why have you done it? You've been held accountable by others. What were you thinking that drove you to follow through on your commitment?

Now make those answers all about you.

Make commitments to small goals for yourself. I have my clients do daily homework for a minimum of 5 minutes a day. Such a small commitment, but doing it every day, or even just most days, builds that relationship with themselves, integrity with themselves, and sets them up to hold themselves accountable.

For you, pick one thing at a time. Don't try to do too much at once. Take one podcast episode topic, write down your goal for that topic on paper, make it real, because once something's on paper and out of your head, it's real in the world. Decide how you're going to implement what you learned on it, and make a commitment to doing that thing everyday for the next week.

After the week is done, review yourself. No judgement, just figure out what worked and what didn't. Then repeat the process with a revised or new plan.

And hey, if you want in the beginning, you can use me like I used Darren. You can think about me holding you accountable and wanting to show up for me. But then whatever you find yourself thinking about me holding you accountable, you have to start thinking about you. You go from, I have to do this for Kirstin to I have to do this for me. Or even better, I want to do this for me.

Value yourself enough to want to do the work for you. Your opinion about you matters more than anyone else's. Care about it. Care about you. Have a great week, bye bye.