

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #49: Overcoming Discouragement

Hi! How are you feeling? Have you felt any discouragement lately? I have! And it's not super fun.

As you've been trying to stop binge eating for all these years, how many times have you felt discouraged?

It wouldn't be surprising to me if you told me it's happened dozens, or hundreds of times.

When you're working toward a big goal like this, mistakes, fails, and setbacks are going to happen and for most people, with them come discouragement.

The discouragement might come after a series of many mistakes. You see yourself binge and binge again and binge again and although you still felt encouraged to keep going after the first few times, eventually, the discouragement sets in at some point. You start believing you'll never be able to stop long-term.

Or maybe you're impatient, and after even just one mistake, you're discouraged. You try one thing one time, it doesn't work, and now you think you can't do it.

Then there's the most unfortunate one. The one when you're successful for a long period of time, whatever that means to you. It could be multiple days in a row, weeks, or months, and then it happens. You binge after all that time. So much work, so much success, and now you're back where you started. You can't believe you binged.

Guess you aren't as successful as you thought you were, right?

We've all felt discouraged whether it be in one or all of those types of scenarios.

And what do you do when you feel discouraged? You beat yourself up, you give up, you stop trying, you take a break. Not much that's good.

It leads to inaction or possibly even negative action.

Your enthusiasm is lost, your confidence is down, and there's a good chance this could lead to more mistakes, more bingeing, and less effort being put into allowing urges, feeling feelings, and thinking on purpose.

This all happens when you're thinking it was all for nothing, you can't do it, you're a failure, now you have to start all over, or this is too hard.

We all do this. We've all had these kinds of thoughts and have felt discouraged. You're not the only one.

I felt it all the time with my weight for years. It was up and down all over the place and I think the most discouraging part was that I thought I knew how to lose weight, there was a way I was so strongly believing in, but I just wasn't able to do it. I wasn't able to eat the way I thought I was supposed to and I see this happen with everyone else who has failed at weight loss. There are actually so many people come to me who know how to eat to lose weight but aren't doing it and they're bingeing instead and have no idea why. It's discouraging to have knowledge but not be able to apply it and put it into action.

I also felt it all the time with my binge eating. There I was trying to stop doing it, so I could lose my weight, and I'd get so discouraged that I couldn't, and like I just said a minute ago, that discouragement didn't lead to progress. But let's be real here, I had no idea how to stop bingeing, so of course I wasn't going to be able to do it.

I think that's a trap a lot of you fall into too. You feel discouraged because you're not making progress, or the kind of progress you want to make, but at the same time, you don't really know how to make that progress. Maybe like I said, you have some ideas, but you don't know how to implement them or the biggest problem I see people fall into, you don't know how to overcome obstacles when they arise.

You can know exactly how to stop binge eating. You can memorize everything I've ever said on this podcast, and do the mini session with me and understand it all, but I guarantee you, you will run into obstacles that you're not going to know how to overcome.

This still happens to me to this day, not so much with my eating because I've done so much of that work, but in other areas of my life.

I talked about my recent experience getting coached a couple episodes back, and how before working with my coach, I kept giving up on myself and not trying. As I think back to before, I think a lot of it stemmed from thinking it didn't matter, thinking it was too hard or uncomfortable, and also, on my own, I wasn't able to uncover so many other thoughts that were getting in my way as well. I didn't even know they were there or that they were problems, that they were obstacles, and it wasn't until my coach pointed them out that I was able to see them and work through them. Or I did know they were obstacles, but I was just too close to the problem to be able to see any other options or solutions.

That's what happens to you. You do well for a day, a week, a month, many months, and then you hit an obstacle. That obstacle is a thought that is in your mind that caused you to binge.

The obstacle isn't someone offering you food or seeing an old binge food again, it's you and your mind.

So if you want to overcome discouragement when you hit an obstacle, you have to think about the obstacles differently and come up with strategies for overcoming them.

There's always a strategy that will work. Always. Sometimes it just may not be so clear for you, but it exists.

When you're in the depths of feeling discouraged, those strategies are going to be much more difficult to come up with since you're in such a defeated place. Defeat doesn't lead to critical thinking, it leads to giving up.

The longer you stay in that place of discouragement and defeat, the more regressing you'll do.

Discouragement is bound to happen, it's common to feel that way sometimes when things aren't going the way you want them to, but what you do with it that matters. Do you indulge in it and stay in it or do you get out of it?

I was feeling discouraged a few weeks ago. I was working on a new project and technology was not on my side. A webpage I needed wasn't loading for I swear at least an hour, possibly two, pages on my website I was creating for the project weren't looking the way I wanted them to, and I couldn't get a video I was recording to look right. Now, I'm okay at web designer and video creation but I'm no expert so I didn't know how to fix them. It was definitely not an enjoyable experience. I wanted to just give up so badly. I wanted to just be done with it all and deal with it later, or just give up on the things I didn't need to do. One of the two webpages and the video were not really necessary or urgent. I could have easily just said eff it and given up on them. I also could have just put off the creating the other page and waiting for the page that wouldn't load. Sure I had planned to do it all that day, I had created deadlines for myself, people were waiting to hear from me about this, but still, I could have just given up for the day. I could have decided it wasn't worth the trouble or that it wasn't figure-out able.

But I didn't. Did I take a little time away to decompress and get my act together? I sure did. But I didn't give up because I got myself out of discouragement and into action.

I decided I would do my best. None of it had to be perfect, it just had to be done. I had to do something. I set a goal for myself, and I wasn't going to let technical difficulties stop me. Sure someone else probably could have done it all better, but that doesn't matter. What matters is that I did what I could with the information and know-how that I have, and I did something. I also practiced patience with that web page that wasn't loading. There was absolutely nothing I could do but wait. I knew it would be back up eventually and whether it took hours or days, I would be able to do what I needed to do when that time came. Huffing and puffing and moping about it wasn't going to solve anything.

It will work out, but only if you change your mindset. It's the only way.

You have to create that encouragement and enthusiasm that you began with by telling yourself there is a way to make it work, even if it's not the perfect way.

Sometimes life doesn't go the way we plan. Sometimes things get in the way. That's the point when you have to let go of your expectation that it's going to be smooth sailing and easy peasy.

Stopping binge eating isn't going to be a series of successes. Failures, mistakes, and set backs are going to happen. You have to realize this or else you're going to create so much unnecessary discouragement

along the way.

Imagine if you expected obstacles to come up. Imagine if you expected yourself to fail sometimes. Imagine if you expected that you're going to give in to binge urges and you're going to gain some weight as you go through this process. It wouldn't be as discouraging and frustrating, would it?

It would come and you'd be like, "Here it is, just as expected."

What if I told you that you're going to have to give in to 20 binge urges, you're going to binge 20 times before you're successful at not giving in to one?

Or that you'll have to not give in to 100 urges before you feel confident that you'll never binge again?

How would you feel about all that? Do you feel discouraged and defeated before you even begin? Or are you ready to face this head on and go through it?

We get mad when expectations don't happen immediately. I've talked about this before where I have clients who are frustrated that they're still bingeing after 1 or 2 sessions. Seriously, it's fine, it's part of the process.

I have a client now who is working on her weight loss and something upsetting happened in her life, she binged in response to it, and she felt hugely discouraged by the weight gain that ensued.

All that work she did was down the drain.

But come on now, was it really? Was all that work she'd done really lost?

No freakin' way. She has a ridiculous amount of tools, mental shifts, and successes that she's forgetting about.

That one binge and the few pounds of weight gain do not take that away from her.

Nothing is taken away and in fact, I like to think she's gaining something.

She's gaining the skill of how to lose weight.

She's good at it, she's done it, and now she gets to work at it more. She gets to become more skilled by working at it again.

Why is this a good thing? Because she may gain weight at some point in her life again. Most of us don't perfectly maintain our weight forever. We have some ups from time to time. I put on some weight during the holidays that I then had to work on taking off. Did I feel discouraged by it? Not at all, because I knew what happened, what I was in for, and how to handle whatever comes. Did I lose that weight continuously and consistently? Heck no, but I didn't get discouraged because I knew it was all part of the process. I'd practiced losing weight before, and now I was just brushing up my skills.

She's also gaining the skill of how to bounce back after a setback.

She's done really well with bouncing back in the past, and now she's getting more practice.

That's for sure a good skill to be the best you can be at it. Life is full of them! So get good at bouncing back.

We can think of our failures as terrible things that we've done to ourselves, or we can consider them opportunities to become better. Better versions of ourselves, better at handling tough times.

This is life. Life is going to be full of failures, mistakes, setbacks, and obstacles. When they happen, they don't have to be the worst thing ever. They don't have to mean you've lost anything.

We are never going to be perfect. We are never going to do anything right 100% of the time. Even the greatest athletes miss shots, goals, or passes. The greatest singers hit the wrong note or forget lyrics. Super models fall on the runway. People show up late. People forget things. People misspeak. It's fine.

You move on from it. You keep going. You decide you're going to figure it out and you do.

When you feel discouraged, just like with any negative emotion, you don't want to run away from it by eating to make it go away and you don't want to indulge in it either.

Allow yourself to feel it, be with the feeling, and as you process and work through it, it will become lighter, you will feel more clear headed, and that's when you'll be able to clearly see what another option to try is.

True mastery is not being perfect all the time and never making mistakes, it's having comprehensive knowledge. You know what you need to know. Doesn't mean you're going to do it all all the time, it means that when times get tough, you know how to get out of it.

You get out of it by feeling whatever you're feeling and then shifting your thinking into a helpful direction.

By doing this, you become better at working through discouragement. You don't eradicate it from your life, that's most likely not going to happen, but you get better at dealing with it.

You can bring yourself into your own belief that it will happen eventually and having that belief is what will stop you from giving up and getting pissed about what happens. It's just supposed to happen this way. This is your process.

And it will look different from someone else's so don't try to compare.

Clients ask me sometimes when they're feeling discouraged about my other clients and seriously, it's not a useful thing to ask or a useful thing to know because their progress doesn't matter. You all have different issues and a different number of issues that are causing you to binge and we're going to tackle them as they come and you're going to work on them and you're going to get better.

It's so interesting doing this work, this work on ourselves, because we never know what's going to happen when. Some people end up only having a few different binge driving factors in their lives and some have many more. We never know until we start doing the work and see what comes up. We can try to predict what our obstacles will be, and we can usually know most of them ahead of time if we take time to think about them, but there will still always be surprises.

Be ready. Be prepared for what's to come by expecting things to happen that will get in the way of your progress. Then when they do, allow yourself to feel discouraged if you do, and then you get back to work and learn from what happened.

You have work to do, and this work is going to make you more skilled and a more evolved person. You have to grow into a person who doesn't binge. You can't stay the same and expect your eating to be different.

So face adversity, go through it, and become better on the other side.

I hope you have an opportunity to do this this week. I really hope something happens that you feel discouraged and frustrated about and you're able to practice working through it. Become better. Bye bye!