

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #59: Fear of Weight Gain

Hi! Welcome back! Let's talk about weight gain!

We love weight gain, right? Yeah right!

Most people try to avoid it at all costs and if you're someone who binge eats, which I assume you are if you're listening to this right now, then you're probably one of those people.

Depending on how often you binge and how much you consume when you binge, there's a good chance that weight gain is something you're battling.

The battle usually entails the binge and the punishing restriction and going back and forth between them.

That was my battle for sure. I was always trying so hard to not gain weight, except during the times when I was apathetic and didn't care and just let the binges and the weight happen.

Then once I'd started fearing that my weight would get too high, I'd get back to calorie counting, which I didn't enjoy, and denying myself foods, which made me feel deprived, and using willpower to say no to overeating, which only lasted so long.

The action that fear drove me to take wasn't positive action, fear doesn't do that, it drove me to go to my personal extremes that weren't helping my binge eating tendencies.

People sometimes get that confused about fear. They think that fear motivates them, but it doesn't really. Fear freezes you or fuels the fight or flight response.

It's a primitive protective response. If you're afraid of a predator then your body prepares you to run or fight. It raises up your heart rate and gets the blood pumping so you're ready to go.

Or on the other side, sometimes being frozen is the best defense. You try not to be seen.

When you start fearing your weight gain, it seems like most of you choose the fight. You want to fight against your urges and binges and yourself and your desires and eat less food.

Fighting can only last for so long and it's not a permanent solution. You're not going to fight forever and if you're fighting to lose weight, you're going to resent the process the whole time. You're going to feel terrible the whole time and you may not believe this, but the process of losing weight doesn't have to be miserable. I know, it's a crazy idea, but I've done it and I've seen others do it and it really can happen.

I know you don't want to gain weight. You don't want your clothes to be too tight. You don't want to have to buy new clothes. Clothes are the most common thing I hear people talk about when it comes to weight gain.

You also don't want other people to see the effects of your eating. That was a big one for me. I felt like I was being outed by my body.

Or you feel physically uncomfortable already and gaining more weight is just going to cause even more physical discomfort. Or you want to be healthy and are afraid of negative health effects.

There's so many reasons why you don't want to gain weight, I hear you.

But here's the honest truth – it might happen.

I'm not saying you're going to gain ten or more pounds, or that weight gain is even inevitable as you work on stopping binge eating, not everyone gains weight, but it could happen.

And so what if it does?

Weight gain in itself is completely neutral. It's a thing that happens and doesn't cause you to feel anything. Weight gain does not cause emotions or else we'd all feel the same way about it, which we don't.

Some people who are underweight or who are bulking up get excited about weight gain. Some people are indifferent to it and don't really have any feelings about it. It doesn't emotionally affect them at all. Then there are those who freak out and go to desperate measures to reverse it or prevent it and those measures do not lead to positive changes.

So it's not the weight, it's your thoughts about it, how you're perceiving it, what you make it mean, all of that that causes you to feel how you do.

It's when you think that weight gain is a problem that it becomes a problem.

I want you to think about why you think weight gain is a problem. What are you afraid of?

What's so interesting to see is that so often, when we're afraid of something and then when we put so much focus on it, we manifest it. We make it true.

So if you put so much focus on weight gain and you fear it, what result will that get you? Well, if your

action from the fear is to desperately restrict your food then the result may be a binge and weight gain. Or if your action is to just freeze in the fear and not do your work to stop binge eating, then you'll probably get the same result.

What you think about is what you create, so think about weight gain and it just might come.

So now what if weight gain wasn't a problem? And what if it happened and you just accepted it?

Not accepting in a way that you're accepting that you're going to keep gaining weight or that you're stuck there forever, but accepting in the way that you're not feeling emotionally charged by it if you gain a few pounds.

You're not hating it, afraid of it, disgusted by it, apathetic about it, but you're just at peace with where you're at.

It doesn't have to be so drama filled. It can just be part of the process.

Weight gain might be part of the process as you work on eating normal amounts of food at meals and you're still bingeing on top of that. Or if you're working on not making yourself overly hungry all the time because you're restricting in an unhealthy way, and you're still bingeing. Bingeing can cause weight gain and if you're still doing it while you're working on not doing it, which is totally normal, then you might gain weight.

The bigger of a deal you make it out to be, the more emotional you're going to get about it. That's not good. Having lots of negative emotions while you're trying to stop binge eating isn't going to help you.

And think about this. After you're done bingeing and you have your ideal eating habits and you're at your ideal weight, weight gain may happen at some point. Maybe you decide to let go for a vacation or the holidays or whatever and a few pounds are gained. What then? Are you going to freak out about it or accept it and move on?

This is not just a valuable mindset shift to make while you're working on stopping binge eating but also for any time in your life. Who wants to live in fear of weight gain and spend their lives being so meticulous about what they eat all, of, the, time? Not me. I want to be able to live my life how I want to, knowing that weight gain may happen at some point in time, and not be afraid of it if I choose to eat differently than I normally do. It'll just take away the enjoyment of the food I'm trying to get pleasure from and if that happens then there is no point!

Weight gain might be part of the process and if gaining a little weight is what will result in you not bingeing anymore, are you willing to accept it if it does happen?

And here's the thing about all of it. If you are doing the work, then the weight gain will only be temporary. You will eventually be bingeing less, then not at all, and the weight gain will be less, then not at all.

But if you're not doing then work, then why the heck aren't you? If that's the case, then your weight and fear of it is not what you should be worried about and focused on. You need to figure out why you're not taking action to get your bingeing stopped.

If you're focusing on your fear of weight gain instead of not giving in to your urges to binge then you're doing it wrong.

Living in fear is not fun. Being afraid of gaining weight isn't fun and might actually lead to you gaining weight.

Let the fear go. Let your weight be whatever it is as you work on stopping binge eating and stop making it out to be a problem. It just is what it is right now and if you do the work you know you need to do, then it will most likely resolve itself.

If you're not doing your binge eating work, then figure out why and turn that around.

I'm always here to help you do that if you're having trouble on your own then working with me in my coaching program to help you stop binge eating just might be one of the best investments you will ever make in yourself. If you want to talk with me about it and find out how I can help you, request a mini session with me at coachkir.com/mini.

In the meantime, drop the fear and get to work. I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye!