

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #63: Ending the Struggle

Hi! You ready? I am! Here we go!

Have you ever thought to yourself that you're going to have to struggle with binge eating forever even if you're able to keep it somewhat under control at times?

That was definitely something I believed off and on, mostly on, for a long time. At times, I would just resign myself to the thought that it was never going to go away and there would be periods of bingeing and periods of not bingeing for the rest of my life and it was something I'd always have to struggle with.

I feel like this is something that is taught to us by well meaning people. They want you to be realistic about what's in store for you in the future. They don't want you to think you're going to be completely free from this because they don't believe you will be. Maybe they are someone who continues to struggle themselves and that's why they believe it, or maybe they're someone who has never struggled with it and just assumes so.

Or, maybe you didn't hear it from someone and you're just telling yourself that because you can't possibly imagine how things could be any different for you. You think you're broken, or there's no way out, or that you can't change, or that you've been this way for too long that you think this is just the way you are now.

When you're so stuck and have tried so many times without lasting success, belief in yourself can dwindle way down. Believing that you can ever be any different than you are can be really hard to believe.

You've struggled for so long, you haven't found a way out, so it can be assumed that this struggle will last forever.

Anytime someone presents this idea about themselves, I can't help but shut it down.

I fully believe that struggle happens, but no one has to live in it forever. That there is a way out. And this is because struggle is all in the mind.

I want you to think about why you're struggling with binge eating. What makes it a struggle?

If we look at what it means to struggle, it means making forceful efforts. So if you're struggling, it means you're making forceful efforts to not binge. You're fighting and in continual conflict with yourself.

Your mind is driving you to binge but you're trying really really hard not to.

Then you get down on yourself and engage in negative self-talk about how you failed. So on top of the battle against yourself, between your urging desire to binge and your deep desire not to, you're creating so many negative emotions to pile on top of that making your whole binge eating experience worse.

The struggle happens because you're using willpower and because of how you're handling the situation.

If you listened to my episode on willpower, episode #27 if you want to go give it a re-listen, you'll remember that willpower is used when your mind is set on wanting or needing to binge, you're feeling an urge to binge, but then you're trying really hard to not give in.

Your thoughts and feelings are driving you to binge but you're resisting taking action on it by telling yourself you're not going to do it, you're not going to do it and trying to talk yourself out of it.

If you don't know how to properly talk yourself out of bingeing, this is exhausting and honestly it sucks. I talk a lot about allowing yourself to feel discomfort, but when you're in that place of using willpower and trying so hard to work against yourself, that discomfort becomes extreme and if you don't know how to properly allow yourself to feel discomfort, then it will become unbearable to you.

Right now, your mind is programmed in a way that drives you to binge. When you're struggling, it's because you're keeping the same programming and trying to output a different result.

It's like if you're programmed to make Nintendos and trying to produce Play Stations. That would be quite the struggle because you don't have the right tools and pieces to create what you're trying to create.

Your brain is programmed to desire bingeing. There are times when you desire to eat a lot of food. Part of you believes that something good will come from binge eating and eating a lot of food.

But you also don't want to binge. You go back and forth between these two desires and in addition to of all of it you also have a desire to not feel uncomfortable and eating is your default way out of discomfort, so the binge ends up happening.

You're caught between too desires, that's where the struggle lies.

If you didn't desire to not binge, there would be no struggle. You'd just binge and you'd be fine with it.

If you didn't desire to binge, there would be no struggle. You just wouldn't binge.

That's why I no longer struggle. I have zero desire to binge. There is no back and forth between doing it and not doing it, it's just a firm no.

It's the same with people who have had issues with drinking, smoking, or drugs in the past. If they still desire it, then they'll spend the rest of their lives struggling to not partake. Those are the people who do struggle forever. But it's the people who eliminate their desire that don't.

If you want to end your struggle, you need the tools and pieces of the puzzle that will lessen that desire so you can become a person who is programmed to not desire bingeing.

If you truly change yourself, your desire for bingeing, your desire for food, and also how you think about yourself, your body, your feelings, if the change is truly made down into your bones, then you will be aligned as someone who doesn't binge.

The struggle is gone.

There are many many people who have stopped binge eating that don't struggle. I've seen it happen for my clients and of course for myself.

Like I said a minute ago, I don't struggle with binge eating, and I also want to add that I don't struggle with overeating either. Do I overeat? Yes. Do I sometimes have to have a conversation with myself about whether I'm going to overeat or not? I do. Do I sometimes end up overeating even after that conversation? Sometimes yes. But none of it is a struggle.

Just because you're going back and forth having some self-talk doesn't mean that conversation has to be a struggle. You can hear yourself, and talk to yourself, and understand where you're coming from and think about what you really want and make a decision without all the drama. Struggle is drama.

It's like if you're having a conversation with someone else about where you're going to go out for dinner. It can be a struggle to pick a place if you are both getting worked up and heated and want different things and aren't willing to compromise. But if you can have a conversation like two adults then you can make it happen.

Have a conversation with yourself like an adult.

You don't have to struggle forever, but know that there may still be times that your brain gives you the idea to eat as a solution for your problems. Or you may desire eating off your plan or eating the random donut that's presented to you. This is normal, even those who don't binge eat experience this.

But it gets easier to say no as you do the work on yourself, your mind, your thoughts. You become more in tune with what you really want and become better at doing what's best for you and your well-being instead of just jumping at any opportunity to eat delicious food that's available.

You get better at managing your thinking, feeling your feelings, understanding why you do what you do, and knowing how to navigate what were once really difficult and tempting situations.

With practice, you get better at these things and you reprogram your brain so you can become a person who effortlessly can say no to food and to bingeing.

We all have our vices, our things that we use as our easy out of emotions or thoughts or things that we feel urges for. As a whole, we call these things buffers. Buffers are things that are done to avoid fully experiencing your life that have net negative consequences. When I say net negative, that means after it's all done, as a whole, so not just the pleasurable consequence of bingeing, drinking, doing drugs while you're doing it, but including the result after it's all done and you feel bad whether it be physically, mentally, or both. It's when you do something to excess at your own expense.

Every single one of us has moments when we'd rather just escape our thoughts and feelings and do something to numb them away for a period of time. We all have different ways of doing this. For some it's a struggle to not do it and some it's much easier because again, they have a stronger desire to not do it than to do it. They have a stronger desire to feel through their feelings and not let their thoughts get the best of them and fully experience all of life. And they are this way because they have practiced thinking in a way that got them there.

When you get to the place where you're doing that too, that's when the struggle will be gone and eating the way you want to becomes more natural and saying no becomes a lot easier.

The struggle isn't forever if you do the mental work to change your behavior. That's where the true change is that allows you to be the person you want to be effortlessly.

Have a great week, I'll talk to you next time, bye bye.