

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## EPISODE #8: GAINING AWARENESS OF YOUR THOUGHTS

Hi! How's it goin'? I'm so good over here. It's officially autumn you guys and I couldn't be more excited! I lived in California for 13 years and if you know anything about that state, you know there aren't really any seasons. So now I'm back in my hometown in Massachusetts and I'm gonna get chilly weather and foliage! What?! So awesome, I can't wait.

Alright, I hope if you're listening to this then you've already listened to episodes 1-7. If so, what have you learned? So much, right??

But I hope one of your main takeaways so far is how important your thinking is.

Everything you do begins with a thought and that of course includes binge eating.

You think a thought, it causes you to feel a feeling, and that feeling drives your action.

You have a thought that urges you to binge, which causes an urging feeling. That urge drives you to binge.

When you feel an urge, what you think when you're feeling it will determine whether that urge gets stronger or weaker, and whether you feel out of control or in control, and that feeling will drive you to binge or not.

So knowing what you're thinking that's causing urges and that's causing you to give in to urges is super important.

But now even though you understand this, you may be having a hard time recognizing what your thoughts are and this is very common.

Most of us don't do this at all. I sure didn't! I was just going from not eating to bingeing in a matter of seconds without any awareness of what was actually going on.

I knew I was feeling the need to binge and that I was thinking about bingeing, and that's about it.

I didn't know why I was feeling that way or what I was doing *to myself*.

I never took the time to actually look at what was going on with me or to consider my options, since I didn't know I had any.

I had no awareness of my thoughts before, during, or after and this is because I didn't know I should. I didn't know how much it mattered.

But it does, very much, because if you have no idea what you're thinking and why you feel the way you do, then you can't do anything about it.

So then every time an urge to binge appears, you end up feeling helpless. Like there's nothing you can do to stop it.

Most of you probably have no idea what you're thinking.

When I first ask new people I talk to what they think about when they feel an urge, usually they just say they don't know.

If this is you, why don't you know?

Well, there's two reasons why people have little awareness of their thoughts.

One is that a lot of our thoughts exist in our subconscious mind.

There's a lot of thoughts we can easily see that come across in language and sentences in our conscious mind, but there's also a lot going on in our subconscious, and this is actually a really good thing.

Everything you do requires thinking, but because you do so many of the same things over and over, you're no longer even aware of the thought that goes into them anymore. When you walk in a room and turn on the light, you're actually thinking multiple thoughts in order to do it, but you've just done it so many times that you no longer have to think each thought in your conscious mind. If you did, it would be, "open door, light switch is to the left, reach arm over to the left, extend index finger, lift up light switch, relax arm down." Could you imagine having to go through that every time you turn on a light? Thankfully we don't have to because all those thoughts have been designated into our subconscious so now it's all just quick and automatic.

We are estimated to think about 60,000 thoughts per day. Sounds like a lot doesn't it? It would be excruciating to have to consciously think them all day so it's pretty great that we don't even have to notice them.

Thoughts our brains have practiced over and over and have become good at get designated to the subconscious. This is where automation happens. No need to think all those thoughts to get some light, you can just go on light switch autopilot.

For you, you don't have to purposefully think all the thoughts to get sucked into a binge, you just go on binge autopilot.

So although this automation is a great thing for us in most parts of our lives, when we're trying to break

a habit, it can make it a bit more difficult.

When you're trying to figure out what is causing your bingeing, a lot of the time the thoughts causing it are subconscious ones, they're not existing out in the open in your conscious mind, floating around as clear sentences. It's because you've thought them so many times that you've gotten really good at thinking them and don't even notice them anymore. Therefore, you have to put in more effort to uncover them.

I'll show you in a minute how to do this, but first I want to talk about the second reason why people don't know what they're thinking.

It's because they're just not paying attention.

As humans, we have been given the gift of being able to look at our thoughts and think about what we think about. Other animals can't do that. All they can do is go off instinct and impulses.

We can look at our thoughts and actually see the cause of our feelings and actions, but most people don't do it. They don't take the time to hear themselves and listen to how they talk to themselves.

And it's really not their fault, this is not something we're taught to do. I didn't do it for most of my life!

But it's so important to look at them because like I said before, these thoughts we think are the cause of how we feel, everything we do or don't do, and what results we have in our lives.

As soon as your brain produces a thought saying, "You need to eat a lot and now," an urge is created.

As soon as you think, "I need to eat immediately," that urge strengthens.

It's those thoughts that create a sense of urgency with your eating and if you don't know what to do with them then you're going to feel out of control.

So how do you find these thoughts causing all this strife in your life?

Start by doing what's called a Thought Download. This is a writing exercise where you give yourself 5 minutes to free-write, without editing or judgment, and see what's going on in your mind. You let your mind flow freely and whatever comes up, write it down, even if you think it's silly or completely untrue or really embarrassing. If it pops into your head, write it down.

This is a fantastic way to uncover those subconscious thoughts. You'll seriously be amazed by what you find within yourself and the best part is that once you know what's there, you'll know what to watch out for. You do a download, you see what's going on, and then you can keep an eye out for when you're thinking that way.

You can do this when you feel an urge to binge, after you binge, or really any time of day when you can make time to do it. I recommend it as a daily practice. I myself write pretty much every day, and it's only for a few minutes. There's so much insight into yourself that you can gain from it.

Just make sure you spend some time looking at what's currently causing you issues. A lot of the time we like to jump into what we want to be doing or how we want to be, but before you can get there, you

have to gain awareness of what's going on with you now.

It's also really helpful to gain awareness of how your thoughts are affecting you.

So I want to teach you the most amazing awareness tool that exists in the world. It was created by Brooke Castillo at The Life Coach School and it is life changing.

It's called The Thought Model or simply just The Model and I've already basically taught it to you throughout the podcast so far, but now I'm going to put it all together for you.

The first thing you need to do in order to use the model is separate out the facts from your thoughts.

This can sometimes be the hardest part because so much of the time we think our thoughts are facts. But they're not!

The statement, "I'm fat" is not a fact. It's your perception of your body. The facts are that you have a body, it weighs x number of pounds, and you could also say you x% of body fat. These are facts. They are things everyone can agree on could be proven in a court of law.

You being fat is a thought. Someone could disagree with you. Someone else could be bigger than you and think you're thin or average, but not fat. Someone else could have the same body stats as you and not say that about themselves.

Here's another example. Say you ate a bag of chips, 15 cookies, and 3 bowls of ice cream. Those are the facts. Then what do you think about that? Was it way too much? Was it a binge? Was it disgusting? Or was it super fun and satisfying? The way you decide to think about it is up to you. Just know that the fact is what you ate and your thought about it is your perception.

Now let's look at the Model and see why this distinction is important.

We start with the fact, or what we call the circumstance.

To show you how this works, I'll just say the circumstance is that I ate a container of cookies

Then circumstances, trigger us to have a thought.

You'd probably be triggered to think, "I blew it" or "I'm a failure" or something like that.

Then, as you know because I've repeated it many times to drill it in, your thoughts cause your feelings.

You think, "I blew it" and you feel defeated.

Then our feelings drive our actions.

You feel defeated and then your action is to eat more.

Then finally, your action creates your result, which ends up proving the original thought true.

After you eat more, you blow it even more. You get to look at that result you create for yourself and

say, “See, I blew it.”

Here's the breakdown again:

You have a circumstance, which is a neutral fact that everyone would agree on.

That circumstance triggers a thought which is your opinion, perception, or interpretation.

Your thought causes a feeling, an emotion.

Your feeling drives an action, reaction, or inaction.

And your action creates your result.

CTFAR, circumstance, thought, feeling, action, result – The Thought Model.

Just so you know, I'll be posting this in the show notes at [coachkir.com/8](http://coachkir.com/8) if you want to check it out to get a visual as well.

The reason why this model is so amazing is because it helps you see the effect of your thinking in your life. You get to see exactly how everything plays out.

You also get to gain an understanding that it's never the circumstances of our lives that create our results, but our thoughts about them.

Circumstances are neutral. They don't cause us to feel or cause us to do anything. Our thoughts do.

You could have the same circumstance of eating a container of cookies, think a completely different thought and then feel differently, act differently, and have a completely different result.

Seriously, it's totally possible. People who aren't affected by their eating like you are and like I was don't think they blew it when they eat that way.

That's why they don't feel awful about themselves and keep eating.

So give all these tools for awareness a try.

Do a Thought Download, pull out a thought from there and plug it into a model. See where it leads.

Also, as you go throughout your day, stay aware. I hear this from so many people, and I used to do it too, that they just zone out, let go, and binge. That's a big mistake.

Stay conscious and aware of what's going on. Even if you end up bingeing, you should know exactly what you were thinking before it happened. It doesn't even have to be a big, juicy reason. Even if it's just, “I want to binge,” that there is a thought that's going to cause you to feel desire or an urge.

When you see a pattern of thinking, thoughts you find yourself thinking over and over again, and thoughts that keep showing up in your thought downloads, then you'll know a big piece that needs to be worked on.

Then what's so awesome is that once you know, you get to choose which thoughts you want to keep and which to let go of.

Awareness is the first step towards change. You have to know what you're changing before you can change it. So start paying attention to what you're thinking. Do Thought Downloads, plug a thought into the model and see what the result is, watch your thoughts throughout the day, before you binge, and after you binge.

What thoughts were going through your head before you binged, during, and after?

And see what your thoughts are causing you to feel and do.

Now I just want to remind you that I'm available to help you uncover your subconscious thoughts and show you how they're affecting you. Sometimes it takes a little digging and the right questions to get to them. If you sign up for a free mini session with me I can help you with a specific issue you're struggling with and help you see the light. I can show you where to go once you gain the awareness, what to do with these binge inducing thoughts. You can find the link to sign up on the show notes page at [coachkir.com/8](http://coachkir.com/8).

Have a fantastic week! Bye bye!