THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #82: Eating Differently Than Other People

Hi! You ready? Let's do this. Let's talk about eating differently than other people.

I know a lot of you want to eat like a normal person. You want to be able to eat like everyone else.

But what's interesting is that when we really stop to think about what that means, it might not actually be true.

What is normal? These days, normal is overeating. It's eating in response to feelings and urges. You probably see your friends and family do it all the time. They don't make conscious, planned out decisions about what they're going to eat. They react.

Now, this may be how you want to be. Maybe you do want to just eat when you feel like it. But I will say, that's part of the problem with your binge eating. You're eating when you feel urges and when you feel like it, not just when you're hungry.

In my opinion, I repeat, this is my opinion, the best way to eat is to eat fueling foods when you're hungry and to make thoughtful decisions about eating joy foods.

I think it's also important to know what kinds of foods you want to be eating as fuel foods and why. Sometimes it can get a little unclear about what foods you want to be eating day to day vs what foods you only want to have once in a while.

Anyway, there are going to be times when people around you are doing what's considered normal and you are not going to want to eat that same way.

This happens to me quite often.

I've told the story before about how I went away with my family and I was the only one not eating cornbread at breakfast. Is it normal to eat cornbread? In that room, yes, and I was the one who was different.

I also get burgers without the bun at restaurants. That's not normal. It's also not normal to do that and get french fries. That's so weird to people and I totally get why. They don't understand my reasons for doing what I'm doing. But I do, and that's why I do it.

I have so many examples I could go into for times when I eat differently than other people because what's considered normal isn't what I want to be doing. If I did what everyone else around me does, I probably wouldn't feel great energy-wise and I'd probably gain weight. Those are two things I don't want and two reasons why I choose to be different.

I see so many of you that want to eat in a certain way, but once other people get involved, you don't follow what you want. You don't want to be different and want to feel normal, so you follow the crowd.

You're not comfortable being different.

You feel insecure about it.

Most likely this is happening because of how you're thinking about your eating issues.

You probably feel a lot of embarrassment and shame about your binge eating. You think there's something wrong with you.

And if you say no to food or eat in a different way than everyone else, are they going to get suspicious? Are they going to think something's wrong with you? Are they going to think you're weird?

Maybe, maybe not. We don't know what other people are thinking. Even if they tell us, we still don't know if they're telling us the whole truth or not.

But that doesn't even matter. What matters is your thoughts. If you're thinking there's something wrong with you and you're weird, then you're going to assume or worry that others think the same thing.

It's not fun to feel self-conscious when you're eating with other people. I bet where ever you are is supposed to be fun and it's not, because you're so concerned about what other people will think about what you eat and don't eat.

And then what happens when you eat just to fit in? You feel guilty about it because it wasn't really what you wanted for yourself. You wanted it for them. You wanted them to think a certain way about you so you did what you thought they would think is normal.

Now, there is the chance that you do make an attempt to be different, and the people you're with don't respond as you'd like. It would be so nice if we could just turn down food or get our food prepared the way we like and people didn't make any comments about it.

It happens sometimes. I order my burgers without the bun and most of the time, whoever I'm with doesn't say a word about it. Or even this past weekend, it was very surprising to me that I was at my nephew's birthday party, I didn't eat any cake, and I honestly don't remember anyone saying anything

about it. I think the most was someone asking if I wanted a piece and I said no and my brother later asked if I wanted to take home leftovers and I said no. I didn't get a hard time about any of it. And let me tell you, I prepared myself for a hard time. Before I went, I knew there would be pizza and cake and I had decided I wasn't having any of it. I ate the food I wanted to eat before I went. I thought about certain people who would be there that might question my eating choices and I was ready to handle it. But nothing of note even happened.

But I know for a lot of you, that's not case a lot of the time. People question why we aren't eating. They won't let it go. I actually did a whole episode on this, #16 on Food Pushers.

There's two things I want to say about that here.

One, I'd question why they're badgering you about what you're eating and not eating. Why do they even care so much? I think some people do it because they feel bad about what they're eating, they think they're doing something bad, and they want you to do that bad thing with them. Or maybe they just find so much pleasure in the food that they don't want you to miss out on it. Or, maybe they do have concerns about you and what you eat.

All these assumptions, but who really knows why they care!

You could ask, but again, they may not even tell you the real reason why. They may not even have the self-awareness to know why they're doing it.

I was out with someone recently at a Mexican restaurant and they were going to town on the free chips and I didn't eat any. I swear they asked me like 3 or 4 times why I wasn't eating any and I just kept telling them I didn't want to. I honestly believe that person felt insecure about themselves eating them and that's why they were doing it. I didn't let it get to me though and I didn't surrender because they kept bothering me about it. I said I didn't want to and then I told them I didn't want to fill up before my meal, I wanted to enjoy my whole meal more than I wanted the chips, and eventually the questioning stopped.

Something I think is important to know here about why I was able to let them question me without conceding or getting upset is that I know their questioning really had nothing to do with me and everything to do with them.

Their action of questioning me was driven by their feelings caused by their own thoughts. They had a thought about how they were eating and I wasn't, it made them feel a certain way, and they reacted to that feeling.

I was just on the receiving end of the effect of their thoughts.

Now, here's the second thing about people questioning and another important thing to know.

How you're thinking about their questions and about your choices matters big time.

Another reason why I was able to not eat the chips was because I was confident in my choice. I'm also confident in my choice to get the burger without the bun and to not eat the pizza or cake at the party.

I wasn't feeling insecure about my choices, I wasn't questioning them, I wasn't concerned about being

different or weird.

I owned everything I had decided for myself.

And that's what you need to do if you want to be eating differently than anyone else.

You have to feel confident that this is what you really want because if you do, it won't matter what other people think or do.

It's like if you were at a party where everyone was doing heroin and you declined. Would you feel self-conscious and insecure about your decision? Probably not. You'd actually probably just say no and leave because who would want to be around that? Not me.

Now, if you're at a party or out to eat and it's not heroin, it's food, and you're declining or doing something different than everyone, you're not going to say no and leave, but you're going to say no and own it because this is your true want.

When you know what you want, you own it, and feel confident about it, then it's so easy to do what you want to do regardless of what other people do.

If you're going to do this, you have to know why and like your reasons.

The problem a lot of people fall into is thinking they can't eat the way everyone else is. Or they can't eat certain foods because they think it will lead to a binge.

Stop it with the can't. You can have whatever you want. You're a grown adult.

What you eat and don't eat is your choice.

So if you have your reasons you like, you can think about them as you choose to eat or not eat and feel good about it.

Like I said with the chips. I didn't want to fill up before my meal as I have done so many times in the past at Mexican restaurants. I was excited about what I ordered and it was going to be nourishing, delicious, fueling foods, and that's what I wanted to eat. Not empty chips.

Or with the burgers no bun. Honestly, the last time I ate a burger with a bun at a restaurant it was a mess. There was sauce leaking out onto my hands, and I like mine medium rare so there were juices flowing and I had to wipe my hands and face after like every bite. No thank you. And I know that's not every burger at every restaurant, but it happens. Plus, I honestly just don't need it. I don't love burger buns and it doesn't really add to my experience of the burger. The burgers themselves are usually huge too. I get yummy toppings and a delicious side and I'm good. And also, I just don't eat a lot of bread anyway, and if I am going to indulge in bread, I want it to be damn good bread, and those buns usually aren't, in my experience.

Now, do I always do that? No, I actually remember a time a few months ago when I was with a friend and we got burgers from a food truck and I just got it the normal way, with a bun. It wasn't really a sit down with a fork and knife kind of venue so I made the choice to just do it as the normal people do. And it was totally fine. I liked my reason for why I chose the bun that time so I didn't feel bad about it.

If you're liking your reasons and creating confidence for yourself then you get to feel comfortable. You get to do what you want and feel good about it.

You get to be different and be okay with it.

Create your normal, what's normal for you. The societal normal isn't even going to be consistent with all people. Everyone has a different idea of what's normal. Sure there are some things that are mostly universal but why does that matter?

Do you want to do things because everyone else is or because you genuinely want to?

That's the choice you're making when you're deciding if you should eat to please others and to feel comfortable or if you're going to eat according to your true wants for yourself.

And let's not forget, if you're eating to feel comfortable in a situation where you're not doing what you really want to do, then you're setting yourself up for discomfort later. There's a reason, or reasons why you didn't want to do that and those reasons are going to show their consequences when you're done eating and feeling comfortable.

Personally, I'm going to be different and I'm totally fine with that. Call me a weirdo, I don't care. Question my choices, don't understand why I do what I do, disagree with me, that's fine. I know why I do what I do, I like what I do, and I like why I do it and that's all that matters.

You can eat like everyone else and go against what you want, or be different and do what you want. Have a great week being different if you want to. Bye bye!