

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #83: Self-Care

Hi! Hello! How are you doing?

Have you actually stopped and asked yourself that question today? Have you checked in with yourself?

I feel like this is something that too many people don't do, they're just go go go without taking a moment for themselves, and it's not good for our well-being if we don't.

This episode today is all about my take on self-care, what is and isn't self-care, and how to practice self-care in your life.

So before we go into the dos and don't of self-care, let's talk about what it even is and why it's important.

Flip it around and you'll get the clear definition. It's taking care of yourself.

It's knowing your own personal needs and true wants, doing what's best for your well-being, emotionally supporting yourself, and taking responsibility for yourself.

It's being there for yourself.

I had a client once who I asked what self-care looks like for herself.

She gave me a list of things that she thinks is her self-care and then I asked how she cares for her kids.

Although there were a couple similarities, there was so much more true care in how she cares for her kids than she does for herself.

This is a huge problem I see happen for so many people. They do everything and anything for everyone

else, and they're there for everyone else, but when it comes to them, they let themselves go unnoticed and uncared for.

I also see the other side of this too. It's where people don't care for themselves and then basically give up on caring for other people as well.

Without the self-care, they're just completely lacking all caring and choosing to care about nothing at all. They don't show up for the people in their lives, themselves included.

Either way, not caring for yourself is not good.

Think about the client I just mentioned. Imagine if she didn't care for her kids, what would happen to them? They'd probably be hot messes, that's what. They wouldn't get things done, they probably wouldn't be as present, maybe would feel more stressed about things in their lives, and probably on top of all of it might feel unloved or unimportant.

When you don't care for yourself, this may happen to you too.

You're not a kid, you're a grown adult, so then now who's responsible for taking care of you?

You. Just you. Not your parents, not your significant other, not your siblings, and not your friends.

You.

And why is it even important for you to do this? Why is self-care important? Why is it important to take care of yourself?

I'd say the ultimate reasons are to create a solid relationship with yourself so you can rely on yourself and so you want to show up for yourself, and also so you can feel your best, physically, mentally, and emotionally.

It doesn't mean you're going to feel amazing all the time, please don't get that expectation. That's not going to happen for anyone not matter how well they're taking care of themselves.

But like I said, it's the best you can. It's doing what you can for yourself so you can live your best life.

When we feel good, emotionally, mentally, and physically, we do the things we want to be doing and we act and show up the way we want to be.

Just like when we don't feel good, we don't do the things we want to do, don't act how we want, and don't show up how we want.

You probably see this with your eating all the time. I hear people say it all the time. When you're in a good place with yourself, you're eating well and it's not so hard. But when you're not feeling good, that's when your eating goes in a direction you don't want it to go.

It can all become a vicious cycle too. Your eating gets all binge and you get down on yourself, and you stop taking care of yourself and you let yourself go and all the good intentions for yourself go out the window. No more working toward goals, no more being who you want to be, no more creating your

best life.

Now, something I sometimes see people fall into is false self-care.

What I mean by this is that they do something that they think is self-care but isn't really.

I think we can all agree that bingeing is not self-care. It's not doing what's best for you well-being and it's not emotionally supporting yourself. Emotionally supporting is not avoiding emotions by eating, its being with them and working through them. Most of the time, bingeing is also not taking responsibility for your actions if you're blaming other people, or the food, or even when you blame your own brain as if it's not your own and it's not you making the decisions to eat more food.

We can all agree that bingeing is not self-care but some of you tell yourself that it is. You tell yourself that your self-care is sitting in front of the tv and eating because that's what you like to do to relax and relaxing is important. I'll agree that relaxing is important, but mindlessly eating is definitely not.

Self-care is something that is supposed to fuel you and fill you up, not deplete you and drain you.

What you need to be aware of too is that sometimes things can be self-care, until they're not.

Overdoing it and being excessive can end up working against you and can cause distress.

I've talked before about how I like being alone and I like watching tv and movies. So there have been days where I'm like, "I'm just gonna sit around by myself and watch tv and movies all day and it's gonna be great!" Maybe I had a super productive week and was ready for some downtime, maybe I'd been spending a lot of time with people and wanted to recharge and be silent. I think those are legit for me. Downtime and not talking sound awesome to me sometimes.

But when I do it for too long or do it too often, it's not so awesome. I can remember so many binges that were preceded by exactly that. It may have been enjoyable for the first few episodes or for two movies, but there would come a point when it was no longer recharging me, but instead draining me. It stopped being what was best for me. But in my mind, I wasn't considering how I felt as time went on, I was only considering that this is something I like to do.

For me in that example, not listening to myself and taking care of my emotional needs then led me to feel desperate for an easy way out of the low feeling. Because I was low, I wasn't going to go seek something productive or genuinely enjoyable, I was going to eat food because it takes way less effort than reaching out to a friend to hang out or brainstorming in that moment what I could do with the rest of my free time.

What I've also seen people do is indulge too long in what they're thinking is self-care and it ends up interfering with their goals and things they want to accomplish with their time. Ever stayed up too late while on the internet, reading a really good book, or watching tv? Or said you'd just do it for an hour or so before you get going on your chores, errands, or work but then ran out of time and that stuff didn't get done?

Not setting boundaries with your relaxation activities is a must if you have other things you want to accomplish. Self-care is not just relaxing and leisure, it's also doing productive things that are important to you because if you don't do them, imagine the amount of stress you end up creating for yourself as

you try to squeeze it all in at another time. Overloading yourself because of your previous overindulgence is not self-care.

What's also not self-care is zoning out with food. If you listened to episode #80 about escaping your life, you know what I mean. If you didn't listen to that one, you must. It is a must listen.

There's so many examples of what can be considered self-care and what's not, but what it really comes down to is the result it gives you in your life. Does it make your life better or worse? And not just in the moment when you're doing it or right after you're done, but overall, in the big picture.

Sure, setting boundaries for your relaxation may not feel awesome when it's time to switch from relaxing to being productive, but later, you sure will be glad you did it. It's truly what's best for you and your life. You are taking care of business.

Now, if you're unsure of how you can engage in more self-care, I'd start by looking at how you care for the other people in your life. But if you're someone who isn't caring for anyone because you don't have anyone relying on you and because you're not in a space where you're caring about caring for and showing up for other people, then think about how you'd want to.

When I asked my client I was talking about how she cares for her kids, this is what she said.

She gives them her attention, is present with them, talks about how their days was, does fun activities with them, is just there with them, and puts aside time for them.

I love that list. And I'd even want to add to that some things that I know other people have mentioned that they do for their kids like adhering to bedtime and wake up time, limiting screen time, making sure they're where they need to be on time, preparing them healthy meals, and so much more really.

And it's all because they care and they want what's best for them.

It's all for their health and well-being so they can live a full life without creating more suffering and negativity than that which naturally comes around in life.

So what does self-care look like for you?

That is for you to find out for yourself. Everyone has different needs and wants. Everyone gets fulfilled by different things.

But here are some things that I think are rather universal and what I see people who are the most successful and positive do.

One, they plan. Planning allows you to map out your life the way you want it to go. You get to decide ahead of time what you're going to do so you can make sure you're doing everything you want to do. This includes planning your self-care, your free time, and what you're going to do with it.

Don't just hope the time presents itself. A lot of the time it won't. We get so caught up in the productive stuff and what we obligate for ourselves that we run out of time and don't get to recharge. Do not let this happen. Make your self-care a priority. Overworking and over doing things for other people and being overly productive isn't doing you any good. It's wearing you out and making your life more

miserable. You'd be much happier if you gave yourself the gift of self-care, downtime, fulfilling activities, and relaxation.

Two, they also are present with themselves. They don't run away, hide, and escape when things get stressful or hard, they stay in it. They work through it. They take care of business! Like my client said about taking care of her kids, she asks them about their days, gives them attention, is there for them. Sometimes it just feels good to be asked, "how are you feeling?" and I don't think we ask ourselves that enough. We just react to how we're feeling or avoid how we're feeling, and don't take the time to acknowledge how we feel and work through any emotional pain or discomfort we might be experiencing.

If someone else in your life is experiencing emotional pain or discomfort, you want to care for them by being present with them and checking in, listening, and being compassionate. Do that for you. This can be done simply by taking a few minutes to write your thoughts and feelings on paper. You share with yourself. You listen yourself. You are compassionate with yourself no matter what you write on that paper.

Three, they also solve their problems that are important for them to solve. They don't blame and act like a victim, they find solutions. This is absolutely self-care. People who search for solutions and work on applying them, and those who reach out to me and ask for help and sign up for my programs and do the work, those people are taking actions for themselves for a better life. Those who play the blame game and don't take responsibility for what they're doing and don't take responsibility by getting help if they need it are not caring for themselves. Now don't get me wrong, I think the fact that you're listening to this podcast to try and help yourself is amazing. You're taking time to listen and understand and are putting more thought into helping yourself than if you weren't listening at all. But if you're not applying what you learn and don't know why and aren't figuring out why but instead just staying stuck that's a whole different story.

Self-care is doing what you need to do to have your best life. That means reaching out for help if you're not able to make the changes you're dying to make on your own. And that's not just with binge eating, with anything. Because the longer you keep trying the same things over and over without getting the results you want, the longer you suffer and the more time you spend struggling.

Don't wait around for someone to fix things for you and don't just hope things will magically get fixed. Take responsibility for yourself and do something about it because you care about yourself and want what's best for you and want to get unstuck.

Okay, so, planning, being present with yourself, solving your problems, and four, setting and adhering to personal boundaries. I think this one is huge. I talked about this earlier and how not following through on your boundaries you set up can negatively affect you. But before you can even adhere to them, are you even setting boundaries to begin with?

Setting boundaries isn't a punishment, it's a gift. Just like with the planning, it's setting yourself up to do what you want.

I have a boundary for myself that I set at the beginning of this year and I'm loving it. I set an alarm on my phone to go off at 9pm every night. This alarm means it's time to turn off the tv, that the day is over, that my social media time is done, whatever it is that I'm doing as my end of the day relaxation, it's complete. It's time to wash up, get ready for bed, and read until I'm tired enough to go to sleep.

I love this boundary I set for myself. It helps me to not go to bed too late so I don't wake up too late and I can start my next day with enough time to get everything done that I want to, including a workout in the morning which I consider a form of self-care for me since I feel at my best when I feel strong and have physical endurance and it helps energize me for my day. I also like having a consistent sleep schedule because I feel my best when I do.

People think planning and boundaries are limiting, but it's the opposite. It's you setting yourself up to live the life you want to live. Maybe not the life you want to live in that moment when you're wanting more and more pleasure and don't want it to end, but for sure the life you ultimately want to live.

And lastly, the most obvious one I think, is do things you love doing. If eating is the only thing in your life that you love doing, you have to take some time to brainstorm ideas for what you want to be doing.

I have a client that I was talking about relaxation time with recently and she was completely lost when it came to knowing what she wants to do at nighttime. Any advice she had been given, any ideas people shared with her, she was just not interested in.

So I asked her what would be fulfilling and she found her answer.

So if you're stuck too, consider how you could make your life more fulfilling. What do you want more of?

Taking care of yourself and doing what you want to be doing and making time for yourself is one of the best gifts you can give yourself. And if you have any beliefs that it is selfish to make time for you, I have to disagree. I think that if you want to be there for others in the best way you can, you have to fuel yourself first. If you're overworking and being overly productive and not resting enough, you're not going to show up as your best self. You're probably going to show up unfocused, not as present, tired, or moody. Or worst case scenario, you might not show up at all.

So show up for yourself. Be there for yourself. Check in, make time for what you want, acknowledge and handle your emotions, take responsibility for yourself, listen to yourself, and keep on caring.

Have a wonderfully, self-care filled week! Bye bye!