

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #85: Deprivation

Hi! How are you? Did you miss me? I know, a week is a long time between episodes. Unless you're playing catch up and are listening to this immediately after another one, or after several in a row. I know some of you have binged on my bingeing podcast!

By the way, have you written me a review yet? Please do it you haven't. Not only do I love reading them, but so do people who are looking for help with their binge eating and want to know what people think about this podcast before they give it a listen. So do it for all of us!

Alright, back to missing things. Do you ever miss a food that you don't allow yourself to have and then feel deprived? Do you ever think you're going to feel deprived if you don't eat a certain food so you eat it to avoid feeling deprived?

I definitely have. I don't deal with the first one anymore because nothing is off limits or not allowed for me anymore. But sometimes I may find myself in the latter. Sometimes you're faced with a one time opportunity to eat something that you may never get the chance to eat again. Or something that only comes around once a year or whatever. Maybe it's something people are raving about, something someone made, something that's seasonal in the grocery store, at a restaurant, or at a coffee shop, or something you came across by surprise when you're out of town. It can be hard to say no to that stuff.

You have goals and plans for yourself and you want to stick to them. But part of you wants to say no and this special food puts you in a pickle.

The fear might come up that if you don't eat it, you're going to feel deprived and that doesn't feel good. So to avoid feeling that way, you eat the food.

Deprived is such a common feeling that leads to bingeing, to eating off plan, and a feeling that a lot of people are quite afraid of.

Fear of deprivation is something I sometimes see when I talk about constraining eating, planning, and limiting foods.

Some people understand the benefits of doing all these things, but they're so afraid that they'll feel deprived if they do.

But what needs to be known about this is that it's not the constraining, planning, and limiting that causes deprivation, it's your mind, your thinking that does.

This is why I can do all these things and not feel deprived at all if I don't eat a special food off my plan, while someone else could feel terrible about not eating it.

So the next time you're feeling deprived, I want you to look at what you're thinking about that food you're thinking about that's causing you to feel deprived. Or what you're thinking you'll think about the food after not eating it that will cause you to feel deprived.

I want to mention the actual definition of deprived. The two I found say, “suffering a severe and damaging lack of basic material and cultural benefits,” and “suffering a lack of a specified benefit that is considered important.”

When we compare these definitions to you feeling deprived about special foods or foods you really like, what it basically says is that you're putting a lot of importance on that food. There's suffering happening because you think you're lacking something important. There's suffering because you think you're lacking a benefit that is important to you.

You're denied, cheated out of, robbed of something you want.

You are making this food out to be such a big deal for you and your life.

If you don't eat it, you will miss out on some serious pleasure from that food. That's what you're thinking.

And our brains take pleasure very seriously. Our brains think pleasurable things are very important because back in the early days of humans, it was.

If we think of all the basic things we had back then that were pleasurable, food, sex, connection, being clean, dry, and warm, these were all things that were necessary for our survival so we could be fueled, so we could reproduce, so we'd have others to rely on to help us since surviving alone was almost impossible, and to stay healthy and avoid sickness or infection.

But now our world is overly saturated with means to get pleasure and our brains have not adapted and in our brains, pleasure is important and more pleasure must mean it's more important.

So if you want your brain learn that these foods aren't as important as it thinks they are, then you have to teach it that they aren't by not eating them and being okay with it and surviving.

One thing you might be doing that is making this lesson you're going to teach more difficult to learn, is telling yourself you can't have it.

There you are, wanting this food, and when you tell yourself you can't have it, it doesn't feel good.

You feel deprived because you're denying yourself something you want.

To make it worse, you might even start telling yourself sob stories about poor you and how it's not fair and feel very victimized.

None of that is useful if you don't want to feel deprived. Always remember that any time you feel deprived, it's you causing it. You're the one building up this idea of how amazing the food is and then you're the one not being fair to yourself by saying you can't have it.

So if you don't want to feel deprived, you have to change how you're thinking about those foods and what you think about not eating them.

I was able to feel less deprived by thinking about why the food as isn't important to me as I thought it was so if I didn't eat it it wasn't a big deal. I worked on changing my thoughts about certain foods. I worked on thinking about why I genuinely didn't want to eat the food rather than only focusing on why I did want it.

I also am now willing to not experience that pleasure I would have gotten from the food so I can experience a better pleasure, a life where most of my pleasure doesn't come from eating delicious food.

And now I make it a point to never tell myself I can't have something. It's never true, I'm a grown adult and can eat whatever I want and can go buy whatever I want. Saying I can't not only is a lie, but also causes me to feel deprived and I don't want to create that feeling for myself.

What I've also found to be useful is making deals with myself. Maybe I'm not going to have that food that's available to me right now but I will have something else I like in the near future. I can plan for a more well-thought out joy food rather than an impulsive one. Decisions always feel so much better when you know it's aligned with what you really want to be doing and when you make the decision ahead of time, it will be.

If your decision is aligned with helping you stop binge eating, it's going to feel a lot better afterward than if it's not aligned.

Making deals with yourself and planning ahead for a joy food on another day still allows you to eat joy foods and have them in your life, you can still get joy food pleasure so you're not deprived of all the goodness of joy foods in the world. But it's going to be more intentional and mindful than just reacting to feeling deprived or fearing deprivation.

That being said, no matter how much work you put in to change how you think about all of it, no matter how many deals you make, there's still going to be times when you feel deprived anyway.

That sneaky little feeling might creep in without your permission.

And ya know what? It's totally fine.

You're feeling deprived, so what? Sometimes we feel deprived. Sometimes we don't get things we want and it doesn't feel good to want without having.

This isn't even just with food, but with all things in life. You apply for a job you want and don't get it, you feel deprived. You went somewhere to get a specific something you wanted and they were all out, you feel deprived.

Not long ago I didn't have a car for almost 4 years and there were times I felt deprived. Although at different points I had a bike, I had access to someone else's car sometimes, I took a train, I rode buses, I could walk, and I had ride sharing, there were times I felt my freedom was denied.

There are so many times when we feel deprived in different areas of our lives and we can either eat to feel better, or we can just feel it out.

I recommend feeling it of course. It's just a feeling and it happens. Get used to it.

Sometimes you're not going to get the things you want and it's okay. We don't always have to have everything we want at every moment....especially if it's something our true self doesn't want and just our emotional self in the moment wants....like that special cupcake that's not on your plan.

The better you get at feeling all the feelings, deprivation included, the easier it will be to say no to yourself.

Real quick before I finish up here, let's not forget about physical deprivation. In this episode I've focused on mental and emotional deprivation but if you're also physically depriving yourself by not eating enough, it's going to have the same effect. You're going to get overly hungry and get urges for a lot of food to make up for what you were depriving yourself of.

Your body wants to be properly nourished and if it's not, it's going to urge you to do it. So save yourself from future urges and feed yourself adequately now. It's one thing to let yourself be hungry for reasons involved in self-love, good health, and if it's a time when it just doesn't make sense to stop and eat, but it's a whole other story to punish yourself by not eating enough because you binged yesterday or are trying to lose weight quickly and not in a healthy way.

Feeling deprived can lead to eating the food you're telling yourself you can't have, and maybe more because you then convince yourself that you deserve it or you don't like being told you can't have something you want or because you just don't want to feel the discomfort that you're causing.

Remember, it's always your thoughts that cause your feelings so you can either change how you're thinking about those foods or you can just let yourself feel deprived.

I recommend doing both actually.

So go out there and stop being afraid of feeling deprived. Talk to you next time, bye bye.