

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #88: Uncertainty and Worry

Hi! You're here! I'm so glad you are and that you have turned on this episode to help yourself and work on you.

Today's episode is all about uncertainty and worry.

You may be feeling uncertain and worried about many things in your life right now and those are not fun feelings to feel.

They're not ones we seek out to feel. But they happen.

We don't know everything. We don't know all the answers to everything that's going to happen in the future.

Of course we all want to know how things will turn out for us, at least most of us do. But we just can't.

Right now, you may be feeling uncertain and worried about your financial situation, your job, your loved ones' jobs, your health, your loved ones' healths, your wedding, your vacation, the future of your favorite restaurants, bars, and coffee shops, about being home more, or about not seeing people you're socially distancing from.

It worries you to think of the negative impact of these things and how they're going to affect you.

It worries you to think of the worst case scenario.

I've had many people tell me how they're worried they're going to binge more because they have more food in their house than usual or because they're spending more time alone.

Or they *are* bingeing more because they're feeling worried about the changes in their circumstance or about the uncertainty of possible changes.

As I talked about in the last couple episodes, these things all happen all the time. People have sudden changes in financial situations, people have the possibility of getting sick, things get cancelled, places go out of business, and things happen that cause us to be alone more. We're just seeing more of it now and people are worrying about different circumstances than they're used to and different uncertainties.

The biggest problem with all of it, is thinking you won't be able to handle it. That's why the uncertainty scares you. That's why you're worrying.

I see this come up with people and their bingeing quite often.

They worry about what they will do if they stop bingeing. They worry about life being harder to handle without bingeing. This worry can stop them from stopping bingeing because they're scared that a life without bingeing would be too uncomfortable and they won't know how to handle it.

They worry about not being able to continue to not binge. They're doing well, they don't feel certain that they'll be able to keep it up, they worry about it, and then eat to soothe the worry, proving that they can't keep it up.

They worry about not knowing all the exact steps they'll need to take to stop bingeing. They don't have it all mapped out, making it clear to see the process, so they never even get started.

All this worrying about the uncertainties is not useful. All it's doing is stopping you from taking action to get to the goal you want to get to.

You may think the worry is protecting you, that's it's preparing you, but it's not. In some ways it might actually be harming you and might be stopping you from doing what will actually prepare you.

Instead of working toward the healthier life without bingeing, you tell yourself that you need the comfort of bingeing, that the effects of bingeing will be more tolerable for you than the discomfort of not bingeing. I completely disagree. You can learn to better tolerate discomfort and if I'm going to tolerate discomfort, for me, it's going to be the discomfort of urges and feelings rather than the discomfort I'd feel after a binge.

If you tell yourself you won't be able to continue to not binge, and you're worrying about it, then guess what. You're going to drive yourself nuts with thoughts about bingeing and create a lot of uncomfortable worry and you're not going to continue. If you don't believe you can keep it up, you won't try to.

If you tell yourself you need to know everything about “the how,” the exact steps to stop, then you're going to be waiting forever. There is no “one size fits all” stop binge eating plan. Even in my group programs, I present all the tools and concepts in a format that I've found to be the best course of action for most people, and it's very useful to approach bingeing in the order I present it. But there's always different things that come up at different times for different people. We're not all the same and we don't

all have the exact same issues. Some people need to work on some things more than others and need to go deeper into some problems.

So I address my clients, my group members personally when their issues come up for them. We still get all the work done, all topics get covered, it just may not be in the same exact order for everyone.

I have a group right now where in the first month, someone brought up how she thinks her relationship with her mom affects her eating. This isn't something that's covered in the first month's videos and materials, but since it was relevant to her then, we coached on it. Someone else may later in the program realize the same thing is happening for them and I can work with them on it then. We can't always know what issues we will become aware of and when.

One person may need a lot of work on their belief that they can stop binge eating in the beginning of the program and are good for the rest of the time. Someone else may begin with a lot of belief in themselves and then stop believing later and at that point needs help getting back to it. That's not predictable. We can't know that will happen. All we can know is that obstacles are probably going to come up and you may be presented with new circumstances as you go through this process and you have to be okay with being able to handle whatever comes your way.

And that's what the strategy is here for all the uncertainty and worry. It's believing you'll be able to handle it.

It's believing you can handle the discomfort, feeling the urges, the thoughts about food, all of it.

Imagine if you believed you could handle anything that came your way. You wouldn't be so worried would you?

I remember back when I was working as a fitness instructor and I was laid off and fired from two studios in two days. I was left with only two classes at the third studio I was working at and obviously couldn't live off that.

Although that was the moment when I decided to do the Life and Weight Loss coach training and certification that prepared me to have the career I have now, there was a period of time where I was uncertain about my future and worried about money. There was no guarantee how long it would be before I'd make money being a life coach and although I had savings, it was all going to my training and certification. All I had were those two classes and unemployment. I was living alone in Los Angeles, I was fully responsible for myself. There was a lot of uncertainty about how I would pay my bills, how I would handle going out less so I wasn't spending too much money, which also meant being alone more and more opportunities to binge. At first, there was some worry. But it didn't last long because I had belief in myself.

I believed that it would work out. I believed that I would do whatever it took to get my coaching practice going, I believed I wouldn't run out of money, I wouldn't lose my apartment, I wouldn't get behind on my bills. I believed I'd be able to figure out how to manage my time, now having so much of it, and my eating during all that time.

It eased my worry to believe I'd be okay.

Now, did I know I would be okay? No, there was no way I could. The future was unknown and I had

no idea what was really going to happen. But I could believe in myself and believe that I would get through this though time.

And I did. Did it work out exactly as I imagined it would? No it didn't. But I paid my bills, I kept my apartment, and I survived. I actually stopped binge eating in that time too after going through the Life and Weight coach training certification. I made it through because of my belief.

I know you probably want all the answers. You want to be able to see into the future so you can know for sure that you and the people you love will survive. You want to know that you'll be okay financially. You want to know that one day you'll stop binge eating.

But unfortunately, you can't see into the future. All you can do is believe in what you want, and feel good about it now, or even neutral about it, so you don't drive yourself bonkers with all the worry.

There's lots of uncertainty right now, but like I said, we're always living our lives not being certain about the future. All we can do is decide how we're going to handle the present and believe that we can handle anything that comes along in the future.

Right now, you're in a circumstance, your life is how it is, and you don't know how it's going to change tomorrow, next week, or next month.

We want to be certain, we want to know.

But what's interesting to think about is that you can feel certainty without knowing. You can feel certain in your belief.

You think you need more answers to be certain but all you need is your mind. Certainty comes in our minds, not in the information we're provided. We feel uncertain, we feel certain, and these feelings come from us thinking that we don't know or believe, or that we do. They come from us not believing in solutions and us believing in them. They come from us thinking things won't be okay and that they will.

Those are the kinds of thoughts that cause you to feel uncertain and certain.

I'm choosing to believe everything will be okay in the end. Do I know this for sure? Of course not, I can't. I don't know what's going to happen to me or the people I love the most, but I feel so much better when I think we'll all be okay than thinking that we won't be okay. This is my choice for how I want to look at it. I also believe that the people who are in charge will figure this out and that the restrictions being placed on us are the right way to handle this and they're going to help to make this all end sooner than later. This is merely my choice and it's the one I want to make so I'm not feeling more uncertain or worried than I have to.

All that being said, even when you do do the work to create a feeling of certainty for you and to stop thinking worrisome thoughts, feeling uncertain and worried is probably going to happen. It's going to come up. Our brains are designed to go there. Our brains scan for danger to help us survive.

When your brain goes there, don't fight it, don't dwell on it, that's just going to cause you to spend your days feeling fearful, worried, and nervous. But notice it and redirect it as best you can. That doesn't mean you try to think positively, but it means you try to think about your circumstances in a more

useful way, in a way that's not going to make your experience of them worse than it needs to be and in a way that's not going to cause more discomfort in your life that you're then going to want to eat to avoid.

Whatever happens, you can handle it and whatever problem comes your way, you'll figure it out. You always have. You're here because you've made it through countless problems in your life. This is just another one that you're going to make it through. Believe that, and you'll ease your uncertainty and worry.

Have a great week. Bye bye.