

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #91: Celebrating Successes

Hi! I hope you're doing well. I am and I'm happy to be talking with you today.

This episode today is about celebrating successes which is such an important part of achieving any goal, of course stopping binge eating included, and something a lot of you don't do enough of.

Too often, you are only focused on your failures, and not in a productive way.

It's one thing to be aware of your failures and use them as a learning experience and remind yourself of what to do and what not to do, but it's another to use them as evidence that you are a failure and a terrible person and worthless and any other kind of self-defeating label.

Using it as evidence for those things is a sure-fire way to bring yourself down and lead you to give up.

It doesn't feel good to only focus on your failures and when you do, notice what happens. You think poorly of yourself, so you feel bad, then you do bad, and you get a poor result.

You think you're a failure, you feel inadequate, so you give up, and you fail again.

I, like everyone else, have had many fails in my life. The list could go on and on with big ones and little ones.

If I used those as evidence that I myself was a failure then I would be stuck and never improve.

I could have a week of eating where I ate on my plan but then on the one day I didn't plan for some reasons and I ended up eating foods that don't make me feel good and overate them. Am I failure for doing that? Did I ruin my whole week? Was all that healthy eating all for nothing?

I could think that and then feel bad. That's an option for me.

Or, I could celebrate all the times I did eat on my plan and see that one day as a mistake that I'm going to learn from. Clearly I have some work to do so let's get to work.

That, would feel a whole lot better and would lead me in a much more positive direction.

You have the option of dwelling on your failures but I want you to think about this. What's the point? What is the upside of focusing on your failures and beating yourself up for them?

I had a client who recently talked about how failure was motivating for her. She felt like negative reinforcement lit a fire under her. But when we looked more closely at this, it didn't really.

It made her feel bad about herself and again, when we feel bad, we don't take positive actions.

Or, if she did actually take action, she was feeling terrible the whole time because she was feeling fearful of failing again.

Failing meant feeling bad and she didn't want that.

It was a crazy cycle of failing, beating herself up, getting to work while feeling fearful of failing, and then this was the kicker. Even when she got to the end, she still didn't feel good.

It's all because the whole time she had these negative thoughts about herself and her performance. Those didn't just go away when she finished the project or achieved the goal. They were still there.

She was still a failure in her mind even though she got what she wanted. There were still things she was looking at as evidence to prove this.

It's not about what you do, it's about what you believe about yourself.

A person can achieve a goal and still think they're not good enough. A person could fail again and again and still think they are good enough.

It happens all the time. Ever watch those talent competitions on tv, either singing or dancing or whatever when the person doesn't make it past the first round because they're embarrassingly terrible yet they have their interview as they leave where they talk about how the judges are wrong and they're gonna make it one day? Yeah, those people got some belief in themselves.

Then there are so many people out there, and this breaks my heart to think about, that could be amazing at whatever they want to do, yet they hold themselves back because they don't believe in what they're capable of. They only see the times they messed up and the times it didn't work out and blow past all the progress they made and the wins they did have.

Throughout the course of your process to stop binge eating, you have had successes. I don't care who you are, how long you've been bingeing, or how many times you've binged, you have had successes and those need to be recognized and celebrated.

Even the littlest win is worth celebrating.

If you usually binge on Friday nights and you didn't on one Friday, celebrate that.

And don't you start down playing it. Don't come up with all these reasons why it wasn't a big deal or why you supposedly couldn't have even binged if you wanted to or that you just weren't feeling an urge for some reason.

It was a Friday, you've binged on so many Fridays, and you didn't on this one. Heck yes!

Celebrating feels good. Don't you want to feel good? Here's an opportunity for you to feel good. Take it!

You deserve to celebrate yourself.

If you're someone who harps on your past failures, then you may not think so, but you do. We all do.

Don't make your past failures mean something bad about you. Don't make your past failures mean that you as a person are a failure.

We all fail, we're all flawed, and that doesn't make all of us failures, we're just all people who fail. All of us.

And failing can actually turn into a success if you do it productively. If you fail and then learn from it and do better because of it then you win.

So if you're not one who typically celebrates yourself and you find yourself focusing on your failures more than your successes, I'm going to give you a couple tips for how you can make this shift.

The first one, is keeping track of a minimum of one success each day.

No matter what, you find a win. This is non-negotiable. You may want to say you did nothing well that day, but I call BS. You did something. Even if it's the tiniest thing, you did it.

You made a plan for breakfast and you ate only that at breakfast. Success. You thought about bingeing for 30 minutes before eating instead of just giving in immediately. Win. You didn't beat yourself up for having binged. Success.

I could go on and on with different examples of successes you could have but I want you to find your own. Search your day for something you did that was a positive action that is aligned with your goal to stop binge eating.

Now, the way you can keep track is simply by having a piece of paper, a document in your computer, a folder in your notes app, whatever medium you want to use, and you just write what you did. Each day, you add to that list.

Just having this list alone can help you build confidence in yourself and a feeling of accomplishment. You get to see, right in front of your face, what you have done that's good for you. This list is evidence that you're not a complete failure. You can't argue with that.

The second thing I want to mention that can help you celebrate is to change how you track your

bingeing. I'm well aware that a lot of you track your binges and this isn't a good or bad thing. It's just data. But too often I see you use it against yourself and it becomes something that disappoints you.

You keep track of your streaks. You talk about how you're 3 days or 1 week or 3 and a half weeks binge free. It sounds lovely to say that, but then what happens if you do binge? The streak is broken and you're a failure. You ruined your streak.

My suggestion, is that you don't aim to have a long streak, you aim to have less frequency. If you want to track when you binge and when you don't, go for it. But look at the days you don't binge vs the days you do.

Imagine you have a period of time when you didn't binge for a week, then you binged. Then you didn't binge for 3 days and then you binged. Then you didn't binge for 5 days and then you binged. If your goal is long streaks, this is going to discourage you. But if you're looking at frequency, that's 15 days of not bingeing and 3 days of bingeing. Personally, I think that's a much more encouraging way to look at it. Only 3 days out of 15 instead of saying you broke your streak 3 times.

It's the same data, you're just looking at it differently and having a different goal.

Give it a try. See if it changes how you look at your progress.

Finding success amongst your failures feels good. It proves you are capable. It feels better than just thinking about how much you fail. Think about how much you succeed.

Still learn from your fails, don't brush past them, they are important information to look at and learn from. But don't let them be the only thing you look at.

You are more successful than you think and more capable than you think. You might also be making more progress than you think. Go find the evidence to prove it.

Raise your spirits by showing yourself what you're capable of. Show yourself that you are a person who can have success, small or big. That means something.

Now you go celebrate yourself! Bye bye.