

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #92: Stopping Binge Eating After Many Years

Hi. I'm so glad you're here because that means you haven't given up on yourself. So good for you! I will never give up on you, because I think you're all capable of stopping binge eating if you really want to and if you have good reasons for doing it.

But in order to do it, you have to stop doubting yourself.

I'd say the number one reason why people doubt themselves when it comes to stopping binge eating is because they've been doing it for a really long time.

They get caught up in this belief that because it's been going on for so long that either it's going to take a really long time to change or that it's too ingrained to change.

People think this about so many different spans of time too. People have told me this when they've done it for 30 years and when they've done it for 7 months.

It's so interesting how “a long time” means something different to different people.

So it bears the question, how long is too long? How long do you have to be bingeing before you're a lost cause?

There is no amount of time! You will never be a lost cause! So stop it.

It does not matter how long you've been bingeing, this is a habit and this habit is changeable. Your

habits are always changeable.

If you woke up at 7am for 30 years, do you think you'd be able to retrain yourself to wake up at 6am? Or 8am? I think you'd probably be pretty confident that you'd be able to change your wake up habit over time with the right methods in place.

The same can happen with your binge eating. Practice useful methods over time and see your habits change.

Let's dig a little deeper into this.

First let's look at what happens when you doubt yourself like this.

If you think you've been bingeing for too long so now it's too ingrained or it's just a part of you now or you're a lost cause, you're going to feel hopeless and defeated. Then what do you do when you're feeling hopeless and defeated? You give up and you keep bingeing. It stays ingrained and it stays a part of you and you create more evidence that you're a lost cause.

When you doubt yourself this way you end up stopping yourself from making any possible progress and you end up keeping yourself in binge eating for even longer.

Now let's look at why you're doubting.

You've been bingeing for as long as you have been. You think about this length of time in a way that causes you to doubt your abilities.

But I want you to ask yourself, why do you think it's been going on for this long? Why have you been bingeing for as long as you have?

I think the simple answer is that you haven't found a method that works for you long term.

When I was bingeing, I can think of a few things I tried. I tried therapy and gave up on that pretty quickly because I didn't see the value of it for me. The therapist's approach didn't resonate with me. I tried tracking and counting calories but that didn't really help for a few reasons. I made eating rules for myself and I kept breaking those. I joined an online forum with other people who binged and although it was nice having the support, I really appreciated that since I felt so alone in my problem, I wasn't getting any actual help or useful advice, just commiserating and encouragement to keep trying. Oh, I also read a lot of articles online that kept telling me the same tips that didn't work for me long-term.

Now, maybe one of those will work for you. Or maybe something else. Different things click for different people.

But there's two things I want to say about the different methods out there and why you haven't been successful in stopping binge eating doing what you've tried.

One, if you tried following one and you weren't successful, it's not the method that failed you, it was your thoughts while trying to follow it. You didn't have important enough reasons to do the work, or you didn't have the belief that you could stop binge eating or you didn't believe the method would work for you or you were thinking that it's not something you even want to be doing.

Two, it was a method that focuses on your actions instead of what drives your actions. The method tells you to eat certain foods or eat certain amounts of foods but never addresses why you're not following the recommendations they're giving you. It doesn't address the root cause of your drive to binge and it doesn't address how to allow urges and emotions so that you're not feeling the need to escape them or distract away from them and if it's not then it's not going to be a long-term solution.

The methods themselves work. People have seen results from the methods you've tried, you even may have. But the problem is that the method isn't something that will work for you long-term because it's not changing your thinking. It's not changing the root cause of your bingeing and overeating. It also might not be sustainable for you because again, it's not what you want to be doing forever.

Let's take a few well-known diets out there that claim to result in weight loss. They all work if you do them. You can lose weight on WW if you eat the recommended points. You can lose weight doing Jenny Craig if you follow the plan they give you. You can lose weight doing Paleo if you stick to the guidelines.

But if you tried them and they didn't work for you, it's not the method that failed you, it's you.

We want to blame the method but we're the ones not following it. If you did follow it, would you have success?

So that's where the real work needs to be done. The real work is on you and figuring out why you're not following the method. Is it not something you'd want to follow for the rest of your life? Maybe you don't like counting points or having someone else create your eating plan for you or having restrictions put on you that you genuinely don't want to have.

Do you not believe in the method? Do you not believe in your ability to follow it? Do you not have important enough reasons to follow it? Do you have urges to binge and you don't know how to handle them? Where are you going wrong and why? That's what needs to be figured out.

You might just keep saying you don't know or blame the method, and that's not going to help you figure out anything.

A lot of you do two things when you're trying to stop bingeing. You try diets and means of controlling your food or you listen to and read a lot of stuff.

Now, listening and reading is helpful. It's insightful. Knowledge is important. But if you're only listening and reading without putting it into action, then you're not going to make progress.

And controlling your food, making foods off limits, and avoiding foods isn't the work that needs to be done. You've tried that and it hasn't worked long-term. That's seriously exhausting work and it's not work that will change the root cause of why you want to eat that food in the first place.

The work that needs to be done is in your mind. Your mind needs to change, not the food, and this is actually a good thing because we can't change the food that exists in the world around us. Your mind needs to change so you're in a mindset where you will more easily take action to change your habit and to apply what you've learned.

Changing your mind is something we can all do. You may not know how to do this on your own, and this is why I suggest working with me so I can coach you through it and help you do it, but it's possible. You've changed what you think throughout all your life. You've changed your habits, routines, and what you do throughout your life and you've done new and hard things.

You are changeable. You are capable of changing.

But now you might really want to know, how long will it take for you to make the change?

Unfortunately, there is no hard and fast rule for this. Some people say there is a certain amount of time that it takes to change habits, but people are saying different amounts of time.

Some say 21 days, 66 days, 90 days.

I personally don't think there is a set amount of time that it takes. I believe it depends on the person and their starting point and this starting point has nothing to do with how much time they're spent bingeing.

It depends on their thoughts patterns and beliefs.

Each person has a different set of beliefs and thoughts that they're holding on to that is causing the behavior.

There are some people who have just a couple beliefs that drive them into bingeing. There are some people who have several.

There are lots of beliefs that can drive bingeing and different people relate to different ones. In my group program, we talk about all of them and people relate to some and not others.

We uncover them as we go and the most beautiful thing to see is when you realize what is holding you back. It's so insightful and once you know, that's when you can take action to overcome it.

Stopping bingeing doesn't happen at the same time for everyone and not bingeing becomes easier for people at different times.

The amount of time they've been bingeing is irrelevant.

I've seen people who struggle with their eating for many years change their behavior quickly and I've seen people who have been bingeing a short time take longer to change.

Time is not the issue, it's the thought patterns and beliefs.

Consistency is also a factor. If one person is working on stopping bingeing every day, they're most likely going to stop sooner than the person who works on it when they feel like it.

And drive. The person who has a more compelling reason to not binge is probably going to see faster results than the person who has reasons that don't really spark excitement and motivation within them.

Think about people who smoke for years and years and then give it up in an instant. They find out they have a medical condition or they find out they're pregnant and they never touch a cigarette again.

You could stop bingeing today, you could, but if you're not, it's because you have beliefs and thoughts that come up for you that you're believing and agreeing with and reaching for the food because of them.

You're thinking you need to eat or that you deserve it and you're believing that. You're thinking eating is your only option and you're believing that.

It's not the amount of time that is keeping you in binge eating, it's your mind.

And the reason why you have failed as many times as you have in the past is because you haven't changed your mind. You may have tried changing the food, but you haven't used tools and methods that change your mind in a way that makes your mind aligned with not binge eating.

Change can happen immediately or it can take some time. Just know that the change that needs to happen is a change in your perception. A change in how you see food, bingeing, yourself, your body, so you fully see them in a new way.

Changing your perception isn't always easy to do on your own and sometimes it takes an outsider's perspective to help you see other options than the one or ones you've been seeing.

This is what's been happening as you listen to all these podcast episodes. You may have thought the way to stop binge eating was by using a certain method or methods and I may have opened up your mind to other ideas for how to do it.

You may not have fully understood what was happening with you and by listening you've been able to see your problem in a new way.

That is the start. And now it's taking that knowledge to the next level by applying it, being consistent, and getting out of your own way.

No matter how long you've been bingeing, you can stop. You are a human that is capable of changing habits, you've done it many times in your life, and this is just another one you're going to change.

Just know that when you think about how you've failed so many times and when you make that mean you're going to fail forever, you are going to feel hopeless and defeated and you're going to give up and fail again.

You have to believe that you are changeable. You have to believe that this is possible for you.

It's not the amount of months or years, it's the amount of beliefs and thought patterns you have that contribute to the behavior. Sometimes those thoughts and beliefs can change instantly when you gain a new perspective on them. Sometimes it takes longer because you're not ready to let them go or not really seeing how destructive they are and that's okay too.

If you're putting in the work, being consistent, and have a compelling reason to do it, you will get there as soon as you possibly can.

How long will it take? Only time will tell. But to even make progress towards finding out how long, you have to stop telling yourself that you've been doing it for so long that it must just be a part of you.

Your habits are not you. Your habits are just things you do because of feelings you're feeling because of thoughts you think over and over.

Stop thinking those thoughts, and the behavior stops.

That's how it works.

People who binge and people who don't have different thoughts about eating a lot of food and you can make that shift into thinking like they do.

It's possible for you. Believe that.

Have a great week, bye bye.