

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #134: The Importance of Joy Foods

Hi!

Before we get started, I wanted to let you know that I'm doing a free training next Tuesday, March 2, 2021 at 12pm ET. I'm going to teach you the 3 essential steps to stop binge eating. You're going to learn what you've been doing that isn't working and why, what you need to be doing and why, and you'll walk away with 3 actionable steps you can implement right away. I'll also give you all the details for the Stop Binge Eating group that will be starting on April 7th and you'll have an opportunity to ask me any questions you may have.

To join the training, go to coachkir.com/training and once you register you'll be emailed the info for Zoom. There will be a replay so if you can't make it live that's okay, but in order to get access to the replay you have to be registered so go ahead and do that now so you don't forget.

Alright, you wanna talk about joy foods? I do, so let's!

If you're brand new to the podcast and don't know what I mean when I talk about Joy Foods, let me give you a brief explanation.

Many people who binge, and some who don't too, tend to categorize foods as good and bad.

I did an episode about good and bad food, #84 if you want to give it a listen.

I don't find that way of categorizing to be useful and instead I prefer to think of foods as either Fuel Foods or Joy Foods.

Neither fuel or joy foods are bad, they both serve a purpose. One is for fuel and one is purely for joy and pleasure. Fuel foods of course are pleasurable, you should always be eating only foods you like, but the joy foods tend to be highly pleasurable and are usually eaten when you're not hungry but that's not always the case like if you're eating a joy food with a meal.

Fuel Foods are nutritious and fuel your body so it can live at it's optimal level of health.

Joy Foods tend to be foods that are either low in nutrition or not nutritious at all. Most people would put foods that are mostly made with sugar and flour or fried foods into the Joy Food category.

For example, for me, I consider my favorite joy foods to be pizza, french fries, chicken fingers, and chips, various kinds. I've learned in recent years that I'm not big into sweets which is crazy because I used to be obsessed and a lot of my binges revolved around sweet stuff but if I had to choose, I'd say my favorite sweet is ice cream sandwiches, in case you were wondering.

So as you're listening to this episode, I want you to think about the joy foods in your life, the foods you eat that you don't consider to be the healthiest, the foods that you eat purely for enjoyment and pleasure.

Most likely, a lot of the binges you've had, have involved joy foods, if not all your binges, I know some of you sometimes binge on healthy, fuel foods.

When it comes to Joy Foods, you don't want to be eating a binge worth of them. You think that's too much.

But how much is enough?

In my Stop Binge Eating group program, one of the first things I have my members do is figure out an ideal way of eating themselves.

This includes the quantity and frequency of joy foods they want to be eating. I recommend they set a limit for themselves that they want to follow.

If the thought of setting a limit on food concerns you because the idea of restricting concerns you, go listen to episode #48 about the two types of restriction. Restriction in itself is not bad. There's useful and unuseful ways to do it.

What I've noticed is that people sometimes freak out when they start putting these joy food limits on themselves, even when they're self-created limits that they know are what they want and what's best for them.

They worry about what will happen if everyone else is eating dessert and they already had their one joy food that day.

Or if they go to a party where there's 5 joy foods on the table and they decided ahead of time that they're only going to have one.

Or if a co-worker randomly brings joy foods into work when they had decided they weren't having any

that day.

What will they do??

Well, they have two options. They can either stick with what they had decided for themselves ahead of time or go off their plan and eat more joy foods.

Neither is right or wrong. But when it comes to you, you need to decide what you want to do for you. You need to decide how you want to be with your eating and your plan for yourself.

If you don't have a plan, if you have never considered deciding ahead of time how often you want to eat joy foods, I would strongly recommend you do. It makes it so much easier to make decisions when joy foods are presented and it gives you a chance to decide, for yourself, how you want to be eating in the big picture.

Now, if you decide that you want to go off your plan and eat any joy food that comes your way, sometimes or all the time, I want you to ask yourself why you want to allow yourself to do this.

What will be the benefit of you doing this?

Simply put, you get the pleasure. You get the comfort, the soothing, the escape.

Without the joy food, you don't get any of those because eating is your default way of getting them.

You may not even know another way to get them.

To you, joy foods are important.

If you think you need to have joy foods it's because you think they're important.

If you think you can't limit them it's because you think they're important.

If you think you can't say no to them it's because you think they're important.

But joy foods are not water. They're not air.

You can not have them, limit them, say no to them, and still survive.

But you'd need to find another way to handle your life, handle your thoughts and feelings, and another way to experience pleasure.

From what I've seen, and from what I've experienced for myself first hand, I've come to find that the main reason why people think joy foods are so important is the pleasure.

It's their main source of pleasure, or their favorite one, or their most reliable or easy one.

Think about this. If you had 10 things in your life that were as pleasurable or more pleasurable than eating joy foods, and as easily accessible as joy foods, would eating joy foods be so important?

Would you be so worried about not having that dessert, that extra cupcake at the party, or saying no to your co-worker if you had other, more pleasurable things, things that align with your ideal way of living, to look forward to?

Would you really be missing out on anything?

Probably not. The main reason why you want that joy food is for the pleasure it will bring you and you'd have way more pleasurable things to enjoy besides them.

You think joy foods serve a bigger purpose in your life. You think they're a solution, a way to feel good, a way to enjoy yourself, and I'm not going to argue that they're not. They can temporarily help you feel better, be a source of entertainment, and distract you from your problems.

But when you make them into THE solution, THE entertainment, THE enjoyment in your life, THE pleasure, that's where you get into trouble.

That's where you get so attached to them that the idea of limiting them, cutting back, or saying no gives you anxiety.

It's as if I'm asking you to cut back on air or say no to water for a day.

You're giving joy foods way too much credit.

There is so much out there that would be just as enjoyable, and that would be less detrimental to your health and well-being in if done in large amounts, than eating joy foods.

Now don't get me wrong, I'm not encouraging you to stop eating them altogether, or to even eat less than you are, I actually encourage joy food eating but, I just want to help you see how your thinking about them is causing you to stress about them if you're someone who puts a lot of importance on them.

As a society we don't stop and question the norms. People talk about joy foods like they're the best things ever and we rave about them.

I'm sure you've listened to people do this and have gotten annoyed. I know I did when I was bingeing. I was like, "Just stop talking about them!" because I didn't want to hear about them and then get urges to eat them. Or I'd be annoyed that they can talk about them like that and not binge on them.

But now, I hear it and I don't even care. People can lust over joy food all they want and it doesn't bother me at all. I may even join in if it's something I really like too. But then that's the end of it. I don't get it into my mind that I must now have it. I don't need it because I'm going to fill my free time with other things that would be just as, if not more, enjoyable as eating a lot of that food.

People can eat dessert on front of me without me joining in and I don't worry about missing out on the pleasure of it because it's not the only pleasure available to me. Plus, after a full meal, that dessert pleasure might result in me feeling too full and the pleasure wouldn't have been worth it.

People can offer joy foods to me and I can say no, with no internal, mental drama in my head, because it's really not a big deal if I don't eat it.

If you hear me say that and you're like, "What?? How??"

The real question you should be asking yourself is why is it a big deal to you if you don't eat it? Why do you worry about missing out on the pleasure of that joy food?

Why is it so important to you?

Joy food is a source of pleasure, I'm not going to deny that. I eat foods sometimes simply for the pleasure I will get from them and for no other reason than that.

But where else are you getting pleasure in your life? What else do you have to look forward to tonight besides dessert? What do you have to look forward to this week that will be so pleasurable, without a negative consequence, that will make eating a joy food or not not even matter?

You don't need endless joy foods in your life. You would be fine living life with less of them, or without them at all really.

Remember back when the most pleasurable food humans ate was berries? They survived.

When you stop thinking joy foods are so important in your life, you won't be so worried about not eating them in the times when you truly don't want to be.

It will be fine. It will be no big deal.

You don't need that pleasure.

You also don't need to eat joy foods to escape your life, your thoughts, and your feelings.

This goes back to thinking they're important because you think they're a solution.

Joy foods are not a solution for anything. At most, they're a distraction away from your problems. They solve nothing.

The real solution is in making better decisions, or just making them if you're driving yourself nuts by being in indecision, changing your thinking about your circumstances, and allowing yourself to feel uncomfortable feelings all the way through.

Let's make your life a life that doesn't rely so much on joy foods.

And one last thing that I forgot to mention. Some of you also think eating joy foods is important for you to feel connected with other people. If joy food eating is the activity, like if you're going out for ice cream with friends, then you fear you won't feel connected if you don't eat any.

But that's not true. Food does not cause connection, your thoughts do. You feel connected when you think connected thoughts about you and the people you're with.

You know this is true because you could be sitting at a table with your whole family, eating all the same foods as them, and feel disconnected. It's because your thoughts are all about how you don't feel connected or how you're different or how they don't get you or how alone you feel or whatever you're

thinking that's causing you to feel disconnected.

You don't need Joy Foods to connect with people, you only need your mind.

Let's stop thinking joy foods are THE pleasure and THE solution and see them for what they really are.

Just one of the many ways to experience some pleasure sometimes.

And before I go, don't forget to register for the free training next week, March 2, 2021 at 12pm ET. Go to coachkir.com/training to register. You won't want to miss it.

Bye bye!