THE
STOP BINGE EATING
PODCAST
with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #139: Uncomfortable Thoughts

Hi! If you've been listening to the podcast for awhile, you've heard me talk often about your thoughts and your feelings. If you're brand new to the podcast, then welcome! I talk often about thoughts and feelings.

This is because each time before you binge, whether you realize it or not, there is at least one thought and one feeling that happen, most likely more than just one, that proceed your bingeing behavior.

You think about eating, you feel an urge to eat, and then you eat.

Then that repeats over and over until your eating turns into a binge.

Your thoughts are what begin the process of eating.

All actions, everything we do, begins with a thought. You have an idea to eat before you eat.

Actions don't just happen.

Now, sometimes they may seem like they do because your thought about eating is lightning fast, you didn't even notice it but, it was there.

Thoughts sometimes show up as words in our mind, you can clearly notice the sentences you're thinking, and sometimes they're extremely quick interpretations that aren't showing up as language.

Later, we could put them into language to make sense of them but when they're happening, there's no words.

Think of a dog. Dogs think but, not in language. And before humans had language, they still had thoughts.

If we wanted to put words to their thoughts now it would probably be so simple like, "Danger!"

"Scary." "Good." "Bad." "Want."

Before you binge, you may be having one of those quick, non-language thoughts or you may clearly hear yourself think, "I need to eat," or, "I want that so bad," or just words like, "Chocolate" or "Pizza."

Now, if you're resisting eating, if you notice these thoughts in your head and are telling yourself you're not going to eat, or you're going back and forth about whether or not you will, or you're trying to reason with yourself, you might start to feel uncomfortable.

You might start getting upset that you're thinking these thoughts because you don't want to be. You don't want to eat, don't want to binge, and these thoughts are making it more difficult for you to do that.

This is the point where people sometimes tell me their thoughts are so uncomfortable.

I try talking with them about their feelings and they want to keep going back to their thoughts telling me their feelings aren't what's uncomfortable, it's their thoughts.

And then I disagree with them.

If your thoughts are simply words, and in this case we're not talking about the non-language quick thoughts, there are sentences you're clearly thinking in your mind, how are words uncomfortable?

Those thoughts are just like a news ticker that travels across your television screen. They're just words on paper in a book.

None of that is uncomfortable until, you put meaning to those words and a feeling is generated.

The feeling is uncomfortable, not the thoughts.

So why is all of this important? Why do you need to know what's uncomfortable?

Well, time and time again I've talked with you all about allowing feelings, allowing urges, and allowing discomfort.

In order to do that, you have to know what that means.

What it doesn't mean is just allowing your mind to go rampant and think all the thoughts about eating when you don't want to and allowing yourself to argue with yourself.

That's not going to be productive. What that's going to do is create more discomfort for you.

What we do want to allow though is the feelings we feel.

When I talk about feelings in this context I'm talking about emotions, just a one word emotion.

I just want to say real quick, in our society we've gotten in the habit of saying things like, "I feel like...." and then stating a thought instead of saying, "I think" or "I believe" and then stating our thought, or just stating the thought without any preface.

Because of this, people get confused about thoughts vs feelings and sometimes when I ask my group members, "How do you feel about that?" or "How do you feel when you think that thought" they give me a thought instead of a one word feeling like disappointed, excited, deprived, or calm. Those are feelings. I feel "guilty." I don't feel like I did something wrong. I think I did something wrong.

Okay? Cool. Just wanted to clear that up.

Anyway, being able to allow yourself to feel discomfort relies on you knowing what's uncomfortable and choosing to allow that.

Your thoughts, that lightning fast interpretation or those sentences running through your mind, are not uncomfortable.

Think about this. If thoughts that are repetitive were uncomfortable, then you would feel uncomfortable thinking about a person you love all day. Ever been in a new relationship where you can't stop thinking about the other person? Yes it may be distracting but it feels good. It's not uncomfortable because those thoughts create feelings of love, or if you're not at love yet, some kind of warm and fuzzy feeling that you like.

But when it comes to thoughts about something you don't want to think about, that's a whole other story. Your thoughts about food are creating desire for the food, then you argue with those thoughts, thinking you don't want them to be there, and that will create some frustration or annoyance, and now you're feeling all kinds of discomfort because there's desire and frustration and annoyance. It's not the thoughts, it's the feelings they cause that are uncomfortable.

Ever heard the saying, "Sticks and stones may break my bones but words will never hurt me." That's because words don't hurt.

In that saying it means that someone can say something to you and you won't feel hurt unless you agree with them or you take what they're saying personally or you make it mean something bad about you and then you feel a negative emotion.

Their words don't hurt. And your words in your head don't hurt either. It's not until they turn into feelings that they may hurt.

So separate the two. Know what's the thought and what's the feeling so you know what to allow.

The thoughts we want to change and dismiss. It's not always as easy as just deciding to, you may have to do some work on your thoughts but, a lot of the time we can just decide to think what we want to think and let go of what we don't.

For instance, if your brain is telling you to binge, you can tell it you're not going to and from then on, dismiss away any thoughts that come to your mind encouraging you to binge. There are some steps that need to be taken to make doing that easier but, you can do that.

Feelings on the other hand, those aren't typically easily dismissed so we want to just allow them to exist until they melt away.

Allow the discomfort to happen instead of eating to try and make it quickly go away.

Look into your body and find where and what the discomfort is. It's not the thoughts in your head. So what is it? You're feeling uncomfortable, how do you know?

Now, many of you are quite disconnected from your body and your feelings and that's okay. You can relearn how to feel. It may take some time so be patient with yourself.

Anytime you're feeling uncomfortable or feeling a feeling you can name, like stressed, overwhelmed, joy, excited, nervous, look into your body and find it.

That's how you're going to begin to allow your discomfort.

Feelings are uncomfortable, your thoughts are not.

In order to allow discomfort, find it, and choose to feel it.

And be patient with yourself if you can't find it right away.

Alright, have a wonderful week and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.