

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #140: Bridging Thoughts

Hi! How are you? Doing good? Me too. Awesome. Now let's get down to business.

Let's talk about bridging thoughts.

So, I've talked about bridging thoughts on previous episodes but I wanted to devote a whole episode to them so you can have a solid understanding of how to use them, why they're useful, and I'm going to give you some example bridging thoughts that you can try on for yourself in any situation where you're working on your thoughts about something.

The things driving you to binge eat pretty much all exist in your mind.

You have thoughts about binge eating, you have thoughts about yourself and what you're capable of, you have thoughts about your body and your weight, you have thoughts about your urges, you have thoughts about so many things that are contributing to the eating habits you currently have.

If these thoughts are the problem then changing them will give you your solution, right?

It would be so great if it were as easy as that. You just decide you're going to change how you're thinking, you do change them, and you're a positive polly and thinking every thought you want to be thinking.

Now, sometimes it is that easy. We can just decide to think differently and it sticks.

But sometimes it's not that easy. And what you don't want to do is try to fake it till you make it.

When you do that, you know you're being fake. Your brain is going to call you out.

As one of my group members recently said, your brain might laugh at you. That's what her brain was doing when she tried thinking what she thought would be a more useful thought.

But a thought isn't going to be useful to you if you don't believe it. The whole purpose of you thinking

a new thought is so that you'll feel a different feeling that will drive a different action. But the feeling won't be generated if you don't believe the thought.

You can't fake your way into feeling better.

If you're trying to think differently and you're not feeling the feeling you're trying to create with that thought but, instead feel a bit icky and dishonest, then you're trying to take too big of a leap.

It's like you're trying to cross a wide river between your undesirable thought and desired thought and when you attempt to make the jump, you freeze and just stay where you are.

You don't believe you can make it. It just isn't believable to you.

So you just end up staying where you are. If getting to the other side isn't possible, then you might as well just stay here.

It ends up being all or nothing thinking about your thoughts.

It's either positive or negative. It's either this or that. It's either this crappy thought or a good one.

But what you're not seeing is all the other thoughts in between that you can choose from.

There's neutral thoughts, less negative thoughts, okay thoughts, all kinds.

And you can use those other ones to build a bridge across the river.

Jumping across isn't the only option, thank goodness.

You can build a bridge. How many thoughts will you need to go through to build that bridge? We'll see. But just get started with one.

Let's use your belief in your ability to stop bingeing forever as an example because I know a lot of you struggle with this thought.

You have a hard time believing you will be able to stop because of some thoughts you have about your past or some thoughts you have about you.

So right now you may be in the thought, "I can't stop binge eating" or "I will never stop binge eating."

Now, this is not a useful thought because you're going to feel hopeless and defeated and therefore not even try to stop. We don't try to do things when we feel hopeless and defeated and think we can't do them.

So let's not think that anymore, okay? Instead believe that you can stop binge eating.

You may then try but, when you do it just feels untrue. You don't believe it. You have all this past evidence or you think there's something wrong with you, and you being able to stop binge eating just doesn't feel true to you.

Now, let me just first say that if you are fully stuck in your belief that you cannot stop, I recommend you check out some of my episodes about belief. You may find numbers 6, 50, 92, and 101 to be helpful in case you want to check those out. I'll link to them in the show notes at coachkir.com/140.

But simply put, it doesn't matter what's happened in your past, your future can be different if you learn and do different things. You can definitely do that. Also, you're not broken. You just have an eating habit that's not serving you well. Habits can change.

Okay? Good.

So making that leap all the way to believing you can isn't creating the feeling of confidence and empowered that you're wanting to feel so that you can make stopping happen.

And that's okay. You can still get there there's just going to be some steps in between.

So I'm going to give you some bridging thoughts that I myself have found to be helpful in my own life and that my group members have successfully used to build their bridges too.

I'll give you the beginning of the bridging thoughts and you just finish the sentence.

“It's possible....” so the full sentence could be, “It's possible that I can stop binge eating.”

“I'm working on....” full sentence could be, “I'm working on stopping binge eating.”

“I'm learning....” so “I'm learning how to stop binge eating.”

Notice how different each of those feel compared to “I will never stop binge eating” or “I can't stop binge eating.” Those thoughts just stop you in your tracks.

“It's possible that I can stop binge eating.” “I'm working on stopping binge eating.” “I'm learning how to stop binge eating.” those feel so much lighter to me. Don't they to you? They state that you're making progress toward your ultimate goal and by thinking those, you're going to take useful actions to make it happen.

These thoughts, although they may not create feelings like confidence and empowerment and those strong determined feelings but, the feelings they do create feel a lot better than hopeless and defeated.

There's so many more options for bridging thoughts so don't think these are the only ones. You can play around with ones that feel truthful to you and work with those. But these are ones I've found to be useful both for myself and others.

And you can use them for any topic.

“I'm working on not hating my body.”

“It's possible that I could learn to trust myself.”

“I'm learning how to allow discomfort.”

The bridging thoughts work as stepping stones from where you are now to where you want to be. They're a way to feel even just a little better.

Thinking, "I'm working on not hating my body" feels just a little better than, "I hate my body," don't you think?

I think so. It does to me.

And as you get more in the habit of thinking this new bridging thought, then you can move on to the next one. Something else that feels a little better and that gets you closer to where you ultimately want to be.

You can also find many bridging thoughts and put them together to build up more belief in what you want to believe. Find some evidence to help you see it's possible for you.

Here's an example:

Your starting point is, "I will never stop binge eating."

Then you progress to:

I'm learning how to not binge eat.

I have done other hard things before so it might be possible that I can stop binge eating too.

I have broken other habits in my life so it might be possible that I can break this one too.

Other people have stopped binge eating so it might be possible for me to too.

My past doesn't have to be the same as my future.

There was one time I didn't binge when I felt an urge and that proves I'm capable of not giving in to an urge.

I'm working on not binge eating.

Each of these thoughts on their own are believable and feel better than thinking you won't stop. Put them together and it's like, "wait a minute...I'm seeing more possibility in this."

You start moving farther away from total disbelief and closer to fully believing.

And along the way, you'll see your actions and behaviors changing too because when your belief is even just a little stronger, your actions will be more consistent.

There will be less giving up.

So when you notice you're thinking in unuseful ways and negative ways and you want to make a change, a bridging thought might be a better option for you than jumping into something super positive.

Also, as I talked about in the Useful Thinking episode, #71, sometimes positive isn't even your final destination. Maybe where you really want to be is in the neutral part of the thoughts and feelings spectrum.

Like if you binged you probably don't want to feel super positive about it but neutral, accepting, forgiving, might be better destinations.

But where ever you're going, it's okay to take your time. You will get there. Don't rush it because rushing might backfire and halt you from making progress you could have made had you taken your time. You might end up just standing there on the side of the river you don't want to be on or falling in the river and swimming back there.

Some progress is better than no progress.

Have a wonderful week making that progress. Bye bye.