

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #156: Rewarding Yourself with Food

Hi! How have you been doing? I'm good. And ya know, I've had people comment before on how I always say I'm feeling good, or better than good. And honestly, when I'm recording and talking to you all, I typically am. Now, that's not to say I'm ALWAYS good. I'm not good and happy 100% of the time. I don't want you all to think I'm some kind of happy robot.

I feel emotions, positive, negative, and neutral. I've actually felt a lot of different ones of all intensities just over the past week. But even though there were some negative, I'm back to good. I always get back to good and so do you. Emotions are temporary even though you may sometimes think they're not.

So if you're not feeling good right now, it's okay. You can feel how you're feeling. Just know that the feeling will end eventually. They always do.

Alright, enough about feelings, I just really felt the need to share that today.

Let's talk about rewarding yourself with food.

It's something a lot of people do. It's very common and you most likely learned from someone else, or many people, that food is a good reward.

You won the game so you go out for ice cream.

You finished a project so you go out for a fancy meal.

You made it through a tough week so you eat all the foods you love.

Now, there's nothing wrong with using food as a reward. Food can be a lovely reward.

It's pleasurable and you enjoy it.

But it can become an issue if it turns into excessive food or if food becomes your only reward.

First let's look at excessive food as a reward.

But before that actually, what even is a reward?

The good old dictionary tells me it's a thing given in recognition of one's service, effort, or achievement.

But I personally think it's more than that.

I don't think you want to be rewarding yourself with "just a thing," you want it to be something you like, you enjoy, or that will help you to feel good, right?

Eating food can for sure be that.

But not bingeing. Let's be clear about that.

You may think in the moment that you like it, enjoy it, or feel good when you binge. You may think that it's a suitable reward for a job well done. You may look forward to sitting alone and eating a bunch of food and imagine it to be something relaxing or rewarding or fun.

But you know it's not.

When you really think about, binge eating a terrible reward.

It makes you feel awful. Why would you reward yourself with something that will make you feel awful?

Something else that some of you do too is reward not bingeing with a binge.

You're so proud of not bingeing so to reward yourself for not bingeing, you binge.

This is very confusing. Do you want to be bingeing or not?

If your goal is to only binge once a week, then sure, it makes sense.

But if your goal is to never binge, it doesn't.

What this shows you is that there is still a part of you that wants to binge.

And when you give in to that desire to binge, you reinforce the desire.

If you want to decrease your desire, so that you don't want to binge at all ever, you have to not give in to your desire. You have to stand your ground that bingeing is not what you want to be doing instead of telling yourself it will be something good or something that you want and then give in to the desire.

So if you are choosing to eat excessively, to binge, as a way to reward yourself, it's very clear that you're thinking there is something good that will come out of binge.

But you know that nothing good will come out of it.

Maybe in the beginning there are some good times, some comfort, some good feelings, but that's not what I'm talking about when I say binge.

That stuff comes from a smaller amount. That's just a joy food.

That's the stuff where if you want to reward yourself with that, go for it. Most likely it won't be problem.

But don't tell yourself that eating all the food, when you know it's too much for you, will be a reward.

Rewards are something you should feel good about before, during, and after.

You never feel good after a binge.

So stop using it as a reward. Especially as a reward for not bingeing.

You need to decrease your desire for it by telling yourself how miserable you will be if you do it and stop telling yourself it will be fine and that good things will happen. That's just going to make you want to do it.

There are so many other rewards, non-food rewards that you can give yourself that you *will* feel good about after.

You can get manicures, pedicures, massages, haircuts, new clothes, a concert, a girls' night, a day trip, take a class you've wanted to take like dance, art, language, or anything else you've wanted to learn.

You could make time to read, do a puzzle, scrapbook, go for a walk around your favorite nearby area, watch your favorite movie or tv show, talk to a friend, meet someone for tea/coffee, have a dance party solo or invite a friend, take a nap, meditate, paint, I could go on and on.

Food isn't the only reward there is and it shouldn't be your only reward. There's so many other options.

Might eating be an easy one? Sure. But easy isn't always the best option. Especially if it results in you feeling badly.

So let's stop using eating excessively as a reward and find options that won't harm you.

You of course can reward yourself with food sometimes but, it will only be a true reward, at least the way I look at it, if it's a smaller amount like a serving or two or whatever doesn't make you feel stuffed. You finish it feeling good still.

With an endless list of options for rewards, mix it up. Do things that you'll find real joy and pleasure in and that will leave you feeling even better than you did when you accomplished the thing you're rewarding yourself for.

Don't let your reward rob you of the good feelings. Keep the good feelings going with your reward all the way until the end.

Choose your rewards wisely and make sure you're actually going to enjoy them, like them, and feel good when experiencing them.

Alright, have a great week, talk to you next time. Bye bye!