

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #160: In the Moment of Feeling an Urge to Binge

Hi! In today's episode, I'm talking about one of the most common questions I get asked.

It's about what do to in the moment when you're feeling an urge to binge.

That's the question you want the answer to, right?

Well, I'm going to answer it for you today.

But, not quite yet because there's something else that is equally as important as what you do in the moment.

It's what you do outside of the moment.

It matters.

The process of stopping binge eating isn't just about what you're doing when you feel an urge to binge.

It's also about what you're doing leading up to feeling the urge, what you're doing when you're just feeling a little desire to eat when you're not hungry, and what you're doing when you're not even close to feeling an urge.

The preparation and how you're handling yourself and how you're thinking outside of the urge is going to affect what you're thinking and doing when you're feeling an urge and what you're doing outside of the urge moment will determine how easy or difficult it will be for you to do what you're supposed to do.

So when people ask me what do to when they're in the moment, I first talk with them about what they're doing outside of the moment.

I want to see how they're thinking outside of the moment and preparing for the moment.

I like to think of this like a sports game.

There's the practice time and game time.

Now, if you want to do your best in the game, you'll spend time practicing and preparing.

This may mean you're thinking about the game and how you'll handle your position, you're visualizing the game, and you're working on your confidence and mindset. And you're physically going through the motions so say you're a tennis player, you're practicing your serve, your backhand and front hand techniques, you're practicing your aim and speed, you're practicing running for agility.

So then when it's game time, you don't have to put a lot of thought into what you're doing.

You've practiced enough that now it's just time for you to execute of what you know to do. The ball comes to you and you do what you know to do, you don't have to put a lot of effort into it.

Because you've put so much thought into practicing what you're going to do and you're actively working on your mind, it's easier to be successful in the game than it would be had you put no time into practicing.

Imagine if you just picked up your racket and played. Sure you may do okay but you'll be more likely to win if you put in the time outside of the game to work on how you want to perform during the game.

So let's bring it back to binge eating.

When you're feeling that urge, it's game time.

If you go into the urge without any previous thought about what you're going to think or do, then you might get lost in the urge and the discomfort and the feelings and the thoughts that come along with it.

You won't be prepared and ready to handle it.

But if you spend time practicing, you will be.

You'll know what to do because you've spent time thinking about it, visualizing it, and retraining your brain to respond how you want it to respond.

And you won't have to put a ton of thought into because you're practiced and trained for this moment.

That doesn't mean it's going to take zero effort but, it does mean you won't be so confused, lost, or easily persuaded to binge.

So, I'm going to tell you what to do in the moment when you're feeling an urge and then I'm going to tell you how to prepare for the moment.

Simply put, in the moment, you choose to feel the urge.

That's the number one thing you're going to do.

You're feeling an urge to binge, you don't want to binge, so you're going to feel the urge without eating.

It really is that simple.

But, in order to do that, you're going to need to be thinking useful thoughts about the urge and about what will happen if you feel it.

If you're giving in to an urge and bingeing you're doing it because you've stopped telling yourself why bingeing is a bad idea and are telling yourself why you should eat to make the urge go away.

Some of you think very negative and scary thoughts about urges and those will not be useful.

Thoughts like, "This is too painful, I can't handle this, I'm going to explode" or "this is never going to end."

Those are going to make you very resistant to feeling the urge and you'll feel a lot of desire to make it go away and the easiest way you know how to do that is by eating, by giving the urge what it's urging for.

But if you're thinking usefully, then you'll feel more desire to feel the urge than to binge.

This means you're thinking about why you don't want to binge, what the consequences of eating all that food would be, and you're thinking that you can handle the urge, it's not going to last forever, and you'll be fine, it's just discomfort.

So that's what you're going to do in the moment. You're going to choose to feel the urge instead of choosing to eat.

And you're going to think useful thoughts about the urge and about bingeing to make that happen.

But here's the mistake too many people make.

They wait until they're feeling the urge to practice thinking how they want to be thinking.

You listen to this podcast, you hear me give you some useful thoughts, then you don't think about it again until you feel the urge and you're like, "wait, what did she say to think?" and maybe you don't remember because you're so caught up in what you always think.

Or you do remember but your brain calls BS and it's like, "No, this urge will continue forever if you don't eat a lot of food right now."

When you're feeling the urge, your brain doesn't believe your new way of thinking because it believes the old way. This is because you haven't spent enough time training it to think differently.

So say you're that tennis player, you learn about tennis, don't practice before the game, and then when you're playing, your form is not good and your mind is all over the place. You're not focusing on what you need to focus on and maybe having a lot of doubt that you don't know how to overcome.

If you want to know what you're doing and have your head in the game and have the mindset of a winner, prepare yourself.

For binge eating, that means you're working on changing your perspective on feeling urges and your

perspective on what binge eating will do for you.

You need to stop thinking that binge eating will do something good for you and start thinking that it's okay to feel discomfort for however long that it's there.

If you're thinking binge eating is the way to feel better, to soothe yourself, to have fun, or to comfort yourself, and if you're thinking feeling an urge will be terrible and you can't do it, then you gotta work on your thoughts around those, and this is of course something you can work in depth with me on in the Stop Binge Eating program. We focus a lot on those two things in there.

But you gotta spend time working on shifting your mindset by first seeing that what you've been thinking isn't useful and it's not giving you the result you want.

And by challenging what you've been believing. Maybe it's not true. Maybe an urge won't last forever. Maybe you can handle it.

And then you gotta watch out for those moments when your unuseful ways of thinking pop into your head.

Those thoughts about how a binge would be good, that you want to eat a lot of food, that you need to feel better now.

And you practice replacing them with thoughts about how a binge is never good, why you don't want to eat a lot of food, and that you can be uncomfortable and be okay so you don't need to rush into feeling better now.

You do this when you're feeling an inkling of desire to binge or to eat when you're not hungry. You do it when it's a less intense desire before it builds up into a strong desire and an urge. It's when you're just considering eating before it feels like a necessary need.

The more you practice thinking how you want to be thinking when you're not feeling emotional and are therefore more rational, the easier it is to think how you want to be thinking when you're feeling all that discomfort of the urge.

When I feel any kind of discomfort, my mind automatically chooses to feel it. I don't even think about eating to make it go away and let me tell you, that was how I used to think automatically.

If I felt nervous, or stressed, or overwhelmed, I'd want to eat something to calm myself down.

If I felt lonely or bored, I'd want to eat to feel better.

But now, I automatically choose to feel.

I've trained my brain to go there through practice and implementation.

I worked on thinking differently about my urges and feelings and then purposefully thought that same way when I felt an urge or feeling so that I would feel instead of eat.

I put effort both into the practice and into the game.

Because I put in the practice, it was easier for me to go to where I wanted with my thinking and do what I wanted to do when it was game time.

I didn't have to put a lot of thought in when I felt the urge to binge or a feeling. I for sure had to be intentional and have a conversation with myself but it was easier to create the result I wanted because I didn't wait until I felt the urge to put in the work.

I put work in ahead of time to make feeling the urge easier.

So, yes it's important to know what to do in the moment when you're feeling the urge.

You choose to feel it instead of choosing to eat.

But to make that happen, work on your thoughts needs to happen and most of that work is done outside of the moment when you're feeling emotionally neutral or just a small desire to eat.

That's when so much of the magic happens, when you're feeling good or okay and you're able to see the truth more clearly.

When emotions and feelings are high, your perception can get jumbled.

So do yourself a huge favor and make time for stop binge eating practice.

Find out why you're feeling resistant to feeling urges all the way through. And work on breaking through those belief obstacles so you can start being more open to doing it.

It really may not be as bad as you're thinking it will be.

Alright, that is all I have for you today. Balance your in the moment work with outside of the moment work.

I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.