THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #162: Blaming vs Taking Responsibility for Binges

Hi! How are you? I'm good. I've really been enjoying my summer I gotta say and one of the most enjoyable things I've been doing is seeing live music. I've seen more live music this summer than I have in years and I couldn't love it more! In the summertime there's a park near me that has live music at least twice a week and there's another spot nearby that does it once a week. So I've been doing my best to prioritize going to them and I don't even know the bands that are playing, I just go and it's so fun to be introduced to new bands and hear all different styles.

So I hope you're putting in effort to do the same. Not exactly the same of course if that's not your thing or if you don't have that available close to you but, I hope you're putting in effort to have fun and do things you enjoy. I know it's easy to just default to the same old same old and spend hours watching television that you might not even like that much but easy can get boring.

I know for me, it has taken some effort sometimes for me to get out to the park but I always know it will be worth it so I get my butt out there. It actually happened last night where the show was right after I finished working and I wanted to just chill at home but I didn't. I went and I'm so glad I did.

Put in the effort to make your life be how you want it to be and fill it with the things you want to fill it with. Even if you don't feel like it. It will be worth it when you're doing it.

Alright,? Now let's talk about blame and responsibility.

So as I sometimes do, I went to the dictionary to define these terms and according to my go to source, they're pretty much the same.

They actually used the other word in each definition.

Responsibility said to blame for something and blame said to assign responsibility for something bad.

I found this to be so interesting because I personally don't see these as interchangeable. So I guess this

is the first time I'm not fully agreeing with my trusty dictionary.

Now, I will say that yes, they're very similar where both can be stating, “this was the cause of what happened.”

So, “this is or they are what was responsible” and “this is or they are what was to blame.”

But after a person binges, I often see a difference in how they handle how they think about themselves after and I attribute it to blaming vs taking responsibility.

Here's where I see a difference.

To me, blame tends to come along with negative feelings while taking responsibility comes along with more neutral feelings.

So the basic meaning is the same but it's the feeling that's different and that means that the action from each will be different too.

Think about how you feel when you blame yourself for bingeing.

You might feel hopeless, ashamed, inadequate, guilty, maybe even angry.

I imagine the thoughts that you're thinking when you're in a state of blame are ones like, “You're a failure,” “You're a disgrace,” “You're not good enough” “You're a screw up.” You're making it personal about you.

It's basically “I did that and I'm bad for having done it.”

It's really negative and when you're speaking to yourself this way and then feeling angry, guilty, or inadequate, you will probably shut down and beat yourself up, maybe self-sabotage.

It's like you're making yourself feel small or unworthy because of what you did. You're making yourself feel bad about what you did.

When I think of blaming, I imagine someone pointing a finger with an angry face. So that's what I imagine you doing to yourself.

Then there's taking responsibility.

With that, I see the feelings as being more neutral.

It's acceptance of what you did and the decisions you made.

It's owning it without making it mean anything negative about yourself.

It's simply acknowledging your actions and decisions.

So you just feel neutral about it.

It happened, you did it. Period.

The reason why this is a more useful way to handle a binge is because of the actions you'll take from taking responsibility vs blaming yourself.

If you're feeling neutral about it, you'll be able to handle what happened in a more productive way.

You'll be in a clearer headspace that will allow you to assess what happened, understand it, and then do better next time.

So let me show you how I see these two show up with people who binge.

Blaming looks like this:

You binge.
You blame yourself and make it mean you're a failure, you messed it all up again, and wonder how could you have done that to yourself.
You feel upset and guilty.
So then you wallow in self-pity, you're hard on yourself, and maybe even eat more.
And the end result is that you continue to see yourself as a failure, a mess up, and don't figure out why you did it to yourself. Instead, you just blame your brokenness or inherent lack of ability, which by the way you don't have either of those things. You're not broken and you do have the ability.

And then taking responsibility looks like this:

You binge.
You take responsibility and state the decisions you made. I did this and this and I didn't do this. It's rather factual.
You feel neutral.
You take time to figure out what you could have done differently and what you'll do next time.
And the end result is that you don't make things worse but prepare to do better.

See the difference?

It's not just about the word choice, it's about what the thoughts, feelings, and actions are that's behind them for most people.

Now, I do want to say that it's unlikely that you will immediately jump into taking responsibility and feeling neutral right after a binge.

Maybe some of you will but it's uncommon.

What you'll most likely see happen is that you feel bad about what you did but then you shift into taking responsibility if for it.

So you're like, “Crap, I can't believe I just did that. I feel awful.”

Then after a moment of that you shift into, “It happened, I did that, and these are the decisions I made.”

Too many of you stay in the crap and the blame for too long.

Let's get you out.

You can probably find truth in both the blame and the responsibility.

So purposefully look for the truth in the responsibility.

You have that ability.

There is nothing forcing you to blame yourself.

And a simple way to get yourself into taking responsibility is by separating out the facts from what you're making them mean.

You have all the factual decisions you made and then you have your opinions about those decisions.

Let's focus on the facts because if you're blaming, the opinions are not going to be helpful for you.

Think about the neutral facts and know that there's nothing inherently wrong with you. You just made decisions that don't align with what you truly want to be doing.

Then you can evaluate those decisions and work on making better ones in the future.

Now, because we're on this topic I do want to touch on something else here real quick when it comes to blaming and taking responsibility.

If you binge, there is no one to blame. There is also nothing to blame.

I know that sometimes you want to blame other people for leaving you alone with your binge foods, or for upsetting you, or for pressuring you to eat. Or you might want to blame the food for being so delicious and available. Or a store for being open or for having certain foods or for being in a certain location.

We can find all different things to blame but, when it all comes down to it, only you are responsible for each binge you have.

You are the one who decides to give in to your urge to binge. You may try to find a reason outside of you for why you did it but the truth is, you decided to do it. No one else made you do it. You felt an urge and decided to give in to it and eat.

And this isn't anything I want you to feel bad about. Again, don't blame yourself for it.

But I say it so you can take responsibility for it, meaning you can acknowledge your decisions and the actions that came from them so you can evaluate and do better.

When you blame or put the responsibility on other people or other things, you're left being powerless because you can't change them.

You can't change the people, the food, or the stores.

You can only change what you decide.

So when you take responsibility you're giving yourself the opportunity to see the power, effect, and ability you have to create your own results.

You create the result of bingeing and you create the result of not bingeing.

So take responsibility for that and do everything you can to create the result you want to create.

Alright everyone, that is what I have for you today. And as I talked about at the beginning of the episode, go out there and put in effort to do the things you love. Even if you don't feel like it.

Have a wonderful day! Bye bye!