

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #163: Binge Eating Success Story – Sabrina

Hello!

Today I have a very special treat for you.

One of my former group members, Sabrina, is joining me to talk about her experience of going from an every other day binge eater to having a binge-free life.

As you'll hear, she had a lot of issues with eating and exercise and her body and it was affecting so many areas of her life.

But she was so determined to make a change so she went all-in on herself and now her life has completely changed in so many ways.

She's such an inspiration and I absolutely loved working with her and seeing her transformation.

You will hear her talk some about her experience in my Stop Binge Eating Program as well and if you would like to join the next round, registration is opening up really soon on September 30, 2021. You can go to coachkir.com/group to get all the info and if you're listening to this after that group's registration closed and you missed that round, you can go to coachkir.com/group to find out when the next one is.

So, without further ado, here's me and Sabrina, talking about her binge eating story. Enjoy!

Kirstin:

Hello, Sabrina. Welcome to the podcast. Thank you so much for being here.

Sabrina:

Hello. Thank you for having me. I am very, very excited.

Kirstin:

I'm so excited to have you here. So let's just start off. This is how I start off all of my interviews with my binge eating success stories. Just tell me a little bit about your story, your background with eating and food, and your weight, and just all of the things that was going on before I ever met you?

Sabrina:

So I am 23 years old and I have struggled with an unhealthy relationship with food and very poor body image and self-confidence since very early childhood. I was bullied in elementary school for my weight, which ended up just encouraging an unhealthy relationship with food. And it wasn't really until high school that I decided to take action to lose weight.

However, I did not approach it in a healthy way at all. In high school, I started restrictive dieting and that's when I developed exercise bulimia, which was my way of purging calories. And I remember getting to a point to where... And this feels terrible to admit, but it was a part of my truth. I would try to vomit to purge calories, but I physically couldn't get myself to do it. So that's why I turned to exercise bulimia instead.

And the combination of restricting and over-exercising and obsessing over trying to eat the healthiest and lowest calorie of foods, sort of ignited that toxic cycle of restricting and over-exercising, which of course, would lead to bingeing and overeating. And when I would allow myself to eat because my body was so calorically deprived, I just didn't know how to control it.

So this cycle of restricting and bingeing, and over-exercising lasted from high school all the way throughout college. And for me, one of the biggest wake up calls I had was when I went to a doctor on campus because I was experiencing amenorrhea, which was the loss of my menstrual cycle because of the restricting and the over-exercising.

And at the time, I was just so afraid of what everyone knows as the freshmen 15, so that drove me to get to that point. And of course, you can only restrict and over-exercise for so long before you start bingeing and overeating. So that was a lot of the why and when, behind my binge eating past.

And in terms of my weight, there is, I would say about a 40 to 50 pound difference, more or less, between my heaviest weight, which I was at when I was bingeing in college, and now, which is the healthiest way I've been at in my life, simply because I no longer restrict myself and I am binge free.

Kirstin:

So amazing. I love that you have gotten yourself to this point. So at your worst, how often were you bingeing?

Sabrina:

Bingeing has been a part of my life really, ever since developing that unhealthy relationship with food. So it's a large spectrum to look back on, but I would say that at the worst of my experience in bingeing, it was happening nearly every other day.

Kirstin:

Okay. So pretty often?

Sabrina:
Yeah, definitely.

Kirstin:
Yeah.

Sabrina:
Definitely, at that point, at that part of my life, for sure.

Kirstin:
Mm-hmm Yeah. And then how was it affecting your life?

Sabrina:
It was affecting my life in almost every way I can imagine. Both restricting and bingeing truly was bleeding into every way I was showing up in the world. It negatively affected my social life because it affected my confidence. I would cancel plans with friends because I felt like I can never have the confidence to reach out first, or answer phone calls.

It also negatively affected my academic life as a student throughout college, because I would dedicate so much time to exercising that I would prioritize purging calories above my schoolwork. And I remember in college, there was a period of time where I would go to the gym for a couple of hours, at least two or three times a day. And retrospectively, I just can't imagine how much different my experience as a student would have been, if I had dedicated that time to my academics instead.

It also negatively affected the relationship I have with my family because again, I would place exercise and trying to lose weight above spending time with my family, and overall, with all of my eating and exercise habits from the past negatively affecting these different parts of my life, it ultimately all boiled down to that poor relationship and lack of love and trust that I had with myself, that influenced how I was showing up in the world, which is exactly what your program helps me address.

Kirstin:
Yeah. So did you notice that, that was even happening? Did you notice that you're over-exercising and your eating was affecting you, or was it just kind of happening and you didn't really think about it?

Sabrina:
I did notice, but I thought that I was doing what was best for me. I was so lost in the lies and the fallacy of it all, that I thought I was trying hard. I thought I was doing the right thing. I thought I was being there for myself and it wasn't until me living this new way of life, and being able to experience having that good relationship with myself, do I see that oh, that just was not it at all.

Kirstin:
Yes. I had such a similar experience where I thought I was doing exactly what I was supposed to do, because that's what the magazines told me. Because back when I was in college, it was all about the magazines because internet was around, but it wasn't what it is today. And I made sure that I wasn't eating below a certain amount of calories.

And then I would exercise. I would take dance class, and go to dance rehearsal, and go to the gym and take exercise classes, and all these things. And I didn't realize what I was actually doing to myself, and people would be concerned about me and I'm like, "No, no, no, no, this is fine. This is how it's

supposed to be. I'm losing weight. This is okay."

Sabrina:

And a huge part of it too, I noticed my unhealthy relationship with food and I always thought that willpower was the answer, which never worked for me because willpower, first of all, is something that is finite and it eventually runs out. And also, willpower just doesn't work because willpower is the idea of restraining these impulses, which that word restraint alone, sets up this environment of you battling yourself.

So naturally, if it's you versus you, you're going to lose by default. So willpower, I also thought that, that was me being strong, but that is also not the answer. And it may have worked in very small bursts, but it was never a reliable approach to stopping the behavior in the long run of things.

Kirstin:

Yeah, absolutely. Right? We have to eliminate the impulse, right? When there's no impulse, then there's no problem. We can just eat normally and exercise normally, whatever "Normal" is, right? I put it in quotation marks, you all listening can't see it, but the normal, right?

If there's no impulse, and that's why we want to work through our urges and allow them not fight them, and really change our mindset and our thoughts so that we don't feel those impulses anymore. So we don't have to use low power anymore. That's the real goal here.

Sabrina:

Yeah, exactly. Exactly.

Kirstin:

Yeah. So as you're going through all of this, did you believe that you would be able to stop it?

Sabrina:

This is just such a funny question and I honestly have a hard time answering this question because I think deep down, very, very deep down, I knew that it was possible, but I haven't had the evidence of it yet. And that was actually a really big key lesson that I learned in our work together, was that you don't need evidence to believe something.

And one example that you gave that resonated with me still to this day, is that we believe that we're going to be alive tomorrow, even though we don't necessarily have the evidence of that, but we choose to believe it anyway, because it is for the betterment of our mentality and ourselves. And because you don't mean evidence to believe something, believing is a choice.

So I think deep down, I did know, but on the surface level and in my actions, I was telling myself that false story of, "This is just the way that I am. I'm the special case. I'm not fixable in this situation." So deep down I knew, but I think it just took a third person, which was you, to pull me into that area of actually, genuinely believing.

Kirstin:

Yeah. How did you get yourself to believe without the evidence? When you were able to see that we don't need evidence, but without any of it and with all those other self-defeating thoughts going on in your head, how did you get yourself to the place of believing it would be possible for you?

Sabrina:

I think a lot of it came from me just wanting it more than I've ever wanted anything else, because as we mentioned, bingeing and restricting, and over-exercising was negatively affecting so many areas of my life that I just was ready for a change. And I knew that I just had to take a leap of faith and really, really just trust the process.

So I think that was a big key point in me building that belief of just trusting, believing, and having faith.

Kirstin:

Mm-hmm (affirmative) I love that. I love that. So then why did you decide to reach out for coaching when you did?

Sabrina:

Honestly, I was at a point in my life where I just really needed to be there for myself. I joined your program during the pandemic, and I know everyone has their own personal pandemic story, and it's not at all to say that mine was any more difficult than the next person, but it was a really big time of struggle for me.

COVID hit right around the end of my last year of college. So within the span of days, I had school and graduation, my job, my college life, my friends from college and my relationship as well, all kind of stripped from my life within 48 hours of one another. And it was one of the first moments in my life after living so, "Go, go, go," where I was sort of forced into this opportunity to really look at myself and decide what I needed to do to make my life better?

I felt like I sort of had the rug pulled from beneath my feet and I knew I wasn't happy with the way I was living my life. And I honestly didn't really know how to fix it, but I was determined to put an end to these specific behaviors that have been hurting me for so long.

So luckily, so, so, luckily, I found your podcast and I listened to literally every episode, and everything you spoke about was so relatable that I eventually, again, just decided to take that leap of faith, and I joined your free five-day training.

And after feeling so impacted by that five-day experience, I took another leap of faith and I joined your six-month long program, and it has just been one of the most challenging, but absolutely one of the most rewarding and life-changing experiences that I have ever pushed myself to do.

And I am just so thankful. I wouldn't change anything about my journey for the world, and I could've just kept listening to your podcast instead of joining the program, but honestly, making that financial investment and promising yourself that you're going to commit, really does give a whole new level of underlying motivation.

And in my opinion, you really, really do need that third person and outside perspective to help pull you from those unhelpful thoughts, and point them out. So I don't really know if I could've done this by just listening to your podcast alone. The program was really where the bulk of the work was done.

Kirstin:

Yeah, and you were so committed to this work, it was just amazing. So why do you think that you were so committed? Was it the investment that you made? Was it wanting it so much? What do you think it

was?

Sabrina:

I think that the only thing holding me back... I knew that the only thing holding me back from living the life that I have always dreamed of, really was myself, and this work does boil down to action after you do uncover those emotions and thoughts. And knowing that I was the only one that was in control of my actions helped me stay committed.

This behavior really was something that held me back in so many ways from being the person that I truly am for so long, and I did want freedom so badly. So intentionally keeping my compelling reasons on the forefront of my brain really helped me stay committed throughout.

Kirstin:

Yes. Yes. And what do you think was the most challenging part of all of this for you?

Sabrina:

Oh, man. I think the most challenging part was that I had just spent so long listening to that harmful voice from my subconscious and acting upon it, that not acting upon it seemed so impossible because I just haven't had the practice doing it yet. And it really was so uncomfortable to just allow that voice coming from my subconscious, that it's been there so long to speak without reacting to it, or without trying to fight it with resistance.

But with practice, letting that subconscious voice say what it needed to say and not acting on it or believing it was the biggest challenge. But again, that really was the definition of the work. At the end of the day, no one likes to be uncomfortable, but deciding to choose that discomfort because you know it is what's best for you is so scary, and it takes so much bravery, but it is so worth it.

And I think it's Brooke Castillo, she has a quote, something along the lines of... And you may have said this to us, something along the lines of discomfort being the currency of our dreams. And for me, that just rings so, so true. And it's not always going to be natural or easy, but it is always going to be worth it.

Kirstin:

Yes. And you knew coming into this, that you were going to have to go through some discomfort. You've heard me talk about it, right? You're aware that this is part of the deal. So what were your thoughts going into that, knowing that you were going to have to go through discomfort in order to make this all work out?

Sabrina:

I think it... And this is something that is so applicable to other areas of life as well. I think just knowing that it is going to be worth it in the end, was a huge thing for me. And knowing that nothing that is worth having in life is necessarily going to be easy, but it is going to be worth it, was a really, really big, compelling reason.

Kirstin:

Mm-hmm (affirmative) Yes. So how do you feel about food now? What is your relationship with food like now compared to how it used to be?

Sabrina:

Oh, man. How do I feel about food now? My relationship with food has entirely changed so, so much. I absolutely love my relationship with food now. I see food as the fuel that it is, and occasional joy and pleasure, which it totally can be both in a healthy light, versus before, I was just so desensitized to the purpose of food and what it actually does for our bodies.

And now, I just see the truth behind why eating consistent meals throughout the day is so important, and that was just never the case before. And overall, I was just so out of tune with why fueling our bodies properly actually mattered.

And I actually have my degree in nutritional sciences, so it wasn't at all that I didn't intellectually understand what food does for our bodies scientifically, but it was really that I was just so blinded by having such a poor relationship with food in my body that I couldn't apply that knowledge to myself because there was so much emotion tied to it.

And to me, I do think that is the nature of disorder. And every once in a while, I will still feel those urges to restrict and over eat. But there're so much smaller and easier to get through because I know how good it feels to be on the other side of it. And really, bingeing and over eating, and all that, it's not even an option in my head anymore because if the thought pops up, I allow it to be there until it goes away, which at this point, is just a matter of seconds.

And it really isn't the thought itself. It's the energy that you either do or don't put into it. So I know that patience is always the answer with it.

Kirstin:

Do you still feel urges to binge like you used to, or are they just more urges to overeat?

Sabrina:

Food is something that we will always have in the rest of our lives. We eat throughout the day, so food is always going to be there. And I think it's so natural for us as humans to want to overeat on occasion because food is good. And no one is perfect and even, "Normal eaters," people who haven't struggled with these things still over eat as well.

So I do from time and time again, have those urges to overeat, but it does not happen often at all. And even if I have that urge, I've had so much practice with this work that I know exactly how to handle it, and I don't act upon it anymore.

Kirstin:

Mm-hmm (affirmative) Or just to binge?

Sabrina:

Nope, not at all. I haven't had an urge to binge since the program has ended, honestly, since the middle of the program. Because again, I've seen the light of it and I've seen that I am capable, and now I do have that evidence. So it's just that it really is that mental muscle that you slowly strengthen and build upon over time.

Kirstin:

Yeah. So the urges will go away. I want everybody to hear that. I said it for myself, now you're saying it, because people ask me that, "Will the urge to binge go away?" And I can't tell everybody enough times. Yes, it will go away. Urge to overeat... Exactly like you said, and I said that on the podcast too,

the urge to overeat is going to be there because we're human and food is delicious. So we're going to feel that urge to have more.

It's fine, but you get so good at allowing that urge and not making it a big deal, and just letting yourself go through it. That really is the ultimate goal here. And something else you said too, that I want to touch on is that you have this degree and you know how to eat, and you know what's healthy. It's not like you are completely clueless in all of this.

And a lot of people, if not most people that I've spoken to and worked with, are the exact same way. I was that way. I knew how to eat. It wasn't like this was a mystery. It's just getting yourself to do it, right? Just having the knowledge isn't enough. We have to figure out why we're not eating that way that we want to be eating, and how to actually get ourselves to do it?

Sabrina:

Yeah. And I think we forget how much... This is what your program has exposed to me, how much are our feelings and our emotions do influence our actions?

Kirstin:

Mm-hmm (affirmative).

Sabrina:

So having a third person again, having you there to pull me out of that and sort of just show me on paper, "This is what you're thinking, which is what is fueling your feeling, which is what's driving your actions," that alone was so life-changing because again, I don't know if I would've been able to really realize that on my own.

Even though you could read all the books, you can have all the education, you can know all the things, but if you can't apply it to yourself, then what is it really worth?

Kirstin:

Absolutely. So your relationship with food has changed so much. What about your relationship with yourself?

Sabrina:

Oh, man. I'm smiling so big, for those of you that can't see me. My relationship with myself has never been better in my entire life. I think for me, it has always been so easy and natural to give love to others. But for some reason, I just struggled so much retrospectively with giving that love to myself in this way that I do now.

And to be honest, it is so hard to feel secure in any environment where you aren't showing up for yourself. So after putting in this work and making the changes, I genuinely do have so much love for myself. Now, I trust myself fully. I am committed to myself, and before that just wasn't the case.

So overall, my relationship with myself has just taken a total 180 and I am my own best friend, and I do treat myself as such now, and I do really put myself first, and that has bled into every other area of my life in the best way.

Kirstin:

In what ways, tell me?

Sabrina:

Oh my goodness, all of the ways. I think my relationship with my friends has strengthened so, so much. I feel more confident in social settings. My relationship with my family as well has strengthened. One really, really cool thing that I've been able to do now is have a... Now that I have a healthy relationship with food, I have a healthy relationship with cooking.

And now with my parents, we can cook and I've been creating recipes and trying out new foods. And that has been just such a new, healthy pastime that I just wasn't able to really take on before, because I had such a poor relationship with food, and I was so scared to eat certain foods and everything.

And I think overall really, it's the confidence, and it's knowing that I'm committed to myself. I think that has been the biggest change. And another really, really awesome thing that this work has done for me is it helped me develop a healthy relationship with exercise. And now, I no longer exercise just to be thinner. I exercise to get stronger, and I am stronger and more physically fit than I have ever been in my life.

And again, I do it even throughout my workout. I tell myself to continue to push simply to get stronger, and aesthetics are just totally aside. So having that new relationship with exercise has also just been so, so cool.

Kirstin:

Your life has opened up so much. I love this.

Sabrina:

Oh, yeah.

Kirstin:

I love it. And what about your relationship with your body, what has that been like?

Sabrina:

Looking at my relationship with my body before, I think that deep down, I knew what I was doing to my body behind the scenes. And I was so hurt by it that I was just so insecure with my body. Because again, I knew that what was showing up on the outside and what was showing up in the mirror wasn't necessarily representative of the real me.

And it just was simply a result of restricting and bingeing dominating my life for so long. And now, I am just so proud to be walking in the body that I'm in. And I notice my body for the things that it does, and I thank my body for the things that it does.

And I love it, not necessarily because I've lost weight and I'm stronger, but mostly just because I treat it and I fuel it with respect, and love really does grow where love goes, and that form of care alone has just made it so much easier to have genuine love for my body and myself. And again, that's aesthetics aside.

Kirstin:

Yes. Arg, how amazing. So if you were going to say one thing to somebody who has been bingeing for years and doing it as often as you were, and was in the same situation that you were in, and they have lots of doubt about whether or not they'll be able to stop, what would you say to them?

Sabrina:

I mean this so genuinely, you are so, so capable of doing this and being successful. I remember actually listening to other success stories on Kirstin's podcasts before joining the program and kind of thinking, "Well, I'm so happy for them. That's so awesome for them."

And for some reason, I still thought that I was a special case where change wasn't possible, and this was permanent in my life. But if there's anything that I've learned from this program, it's that our thoughts are not always the truth. And that thought of being unchangeable is not the truth.

And anyone can make a change, and all it takes is patience, effort and consistency, and belief. And if you can tackle those four things, you can make this change for your life. It is so, so worth it, and you are so capable.

Kirstin:

I could not agree with you more on everything that you just said, everything. So are there any other words of wisdom that you would like to share for everybody, that you haven't already?

Sabrina:

I would just say don't let your past determine your future. You really are in complete control of your actions and your life, and you've made it this... If you've made it this far in Kirstin's podcast and you're considering joining her program, just do it. It is so, so worth the investment.

And a big fear that I had, to be honest, was that, "Well, what if six months just isn't enough time?" And the truth is, first of all, it is enough time because you decide that it's enough time. But also, the material that you learn in this work is information that you will remember for the rest of your life. So even if the timeframe intimidates you, your brain will always have that information that you need to get to your end goal.

And Kirstin really does teach you how to self-coach by the end of your program, and manage your thinking, and it's material that really is applicable to every single other part of life, because it teaches you how to manage your thoughts and emotions. And if you're considering it, just take the leap of faith, be patient, be consistent. Remember your why? Trust the process, and I say just do it. Life is too short to not.

Kirstin:

Yes. And then you can be in Sabrina's shoes.

Sabrina:

You can.

Kirstin:

Yes. Well, thank you so much for being here. I have loved listening to your story. I've loved working with you. I've just loved all of this. So thank you so much for sharing with everybody, and I really hope that everybody listens to what you're saying and starts believing in themselves, just like you made that shift for yourself.

Sabrina:

Of course, Kirstin. I can't thank you enough. You have absolutely changed my life and it has just been

a blessing being able to talk with you. So thank you.

Don't you just love her? I love her. I just love hearing these stories so much and I really hope this helps you believe that it's possible for you too.

Like with so many of the success stories that have been shared on this podcast, there were many times she didn't believe in herself. She didn't think she could do it. But what we have to see is that these are just our thoughts, our opinions, and they are not facts. They're just assumptions based on past experiences but they're not true.

I honestly believe everyone can stop binge eating. Everyone. And that includes you.

Now, if what Sabrina talked about here resonated with you, and if this podcast as a whole has resonated with you, and you are ready to take the next step with me to stop binge eating, come join me in the program. Let's do this together and make your binge-free life a reality.

Go to coachkir.com/group to get all the info.

I'll see you later.

Bye bye.