

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #187: When Nothing's as Pleasurable or Easy as Eating

Hi! When you're wanting pleasure, eating may seem like the best option. It can be highly pleasurable.

And in your mind, there might be nothing else that beats it. Eating may be the most pleasurable when you compare it to your other options.

I'm not going to argue this, it just may be.

But probably not all the time. I hope all of you are making a point to include highly pleasurable things in your life that aren't food. If you're not, start now. Just find one thing and plan for it.

But, know that you're not going to have highly pleasurable things going on every single day of your life.

Most days, your pleasures will be more moderate. You'll be engaging in chill, relaxing, challenging, or sociable enjoyable activities that don't get you super excited but you enjoy them.

And again, if you're not incorporating those kinds of things into your life, start now.

Because we all want pleasure. We all deserve pleasure. Give it to yourself and find things you like to do that isn't eating a lot of food alone by yourself.

Because if you don't, you're going to continue to find all your pleasure in food and if you decide to eat for pleasure less without replacing it with other sources of pleasure, you'll feel deprived of pleasure and that's not going to be a useful direction to go in.

Stopping binge eating isn't also stopping pleasure. It's taking away a false pleasure, something you think is pleasurable but truly isn't when you look at the whole story, not just the part where the food tastes good.

When you take that away, you're going to replace it with things that really are truly pleasurable, from start to finish and beyond, things you'll feel good about having done.

So, you're going to have options for other pleasurable things. Moderate pleasures.

But even when you have them, you might not choose them.

You may look at the two options – eat food or do this thing – and choose the food.

You may choose the food because it's easier, especially if the other thing requires set up, like if you're painting and you have to gather and set up your supplies, or requires making a decision within the set up like if you're choosing to watch a movie and now you have to decide which one, or if it requires you to leave your home. Eating will probably be easier. The set up and the decision will probably be easier for you and if you already have something at home, there's zero travel involved.

Overall, eating may be the easier choice.

And with that, you may also think that eating is the more pleasurable choice.

The other thing won't feel as good, you won't get the same high, you won't get as much pleasure.

And maybe that's true, or maybe not.

First things first, is it really true or are you just telling yourself it's true?

If you only consider the part when you're actually in it, when you're doing the thing that's not eating a lot of food alone, is that thing really not as pleasurable as eating food?

Once you get going painting, playing your instrument, watching the movie, writing, knitting, crafting, dancing, walking, moving your body, reading, doing the puzzle, coloring, talking with your friend, whatever it is you're doing, is it as pleasurable as eating food?

Now, I can't decide that for you and say it is or isn't, that's just something you're going to explore for yourself.

See if you've been telling yourself the truth about it.

And if what's true to you is that it's not as pleasurable as eating food, that's okay. Don't beat yourself up or shame yourself if that's your answer.

It's okay if it's not and depending on what food you're thinking of, it may have been designed to be that way.

There are foods that are created to be highly pleasurable, using math and science and analysis, so that we'll keep choosing them.

It makes sense that they are winning the pleasure competition for you.

So yeah, when it's pleasure time for you, and you have the option of choosing this highly pleasurable, easily accessible option or a moderately pleasurable option that's going to take some effort to get, it might be hard for you to choose the second option.

But there's something you can do to make it easier for yourself.

You can look at the big picture, the whole story, and decide based on what's the better option.

You can choose by which is quickest and easiest or by which is the better option overall.

So many of you tend to only focus on the quick and easy, especially if you're feeling an urge or some other uncomfortable feeling because you're looking for the quick and easy way to feel better.

You're also looking for the way to feel WAY better and get optimal pleasure.

If you're only focusing on getting out of how you're feeling ASAP and getting optimal pleasure then eating is going to be what you choose because eating will give you that.

You get to feel better quickly and get all that pleasure goodness.

But what happens after you get that quick, easy, high of pleasure by eating a lot of food?

You get a low that's long-lasting and hard.

With the high comes the low, with the easy comes the hard.

When you're eating all that food, you're not going to have the good without the bad, you've proven this to yourself time and time again.

So there is one option for you and then, there's the other option. The one that's not as easy to get going, and isn't as highly pleasurable.

How's that one going to turn out?

My guess, is pretty well.

You'll probably feel pretty good after you're done and carrying on with your life will be easy. You won't have a stomach full of food and depleted energy holding you back from whatever it is you're wanting to do next, or later, or the next day.

It's not highs and lows, it's moderate all the way through.

It's effort and then easy.

It's basically the opposite of bingeing.

So when you look at the whole story for both options, which is the better option?

That's where you're going to make your decision from.

When you look at the whole story of both options, you see how much better the moderate option is.

And when you do, that's when your desire for it will increase.

You'll make yourself desire it more than eating when you look for the reasons why it's a better option.

And your desire for eating will decrease, making it easier to say no.

Now, at first, those desires may be about equal. You may have competing desires where you're wanting both and see the good and not so good in both.

But you're going to choose the overall better option anyway because you know it's what you really want, it's what your true self wants.

You'll allow that desire for eating to be there and you'll intentionally tell yourself why the not eating option is the better option, and you'll choose it over and over.

You'll intentionally find the pleasure in the activity and if your brain wants to tell you that you should eat instead, you're going to tell it why you don't want to.

Overtime, this will get so much easier and you'll teach your brain that this is better than eating. You'll also get more into the habit of doing the other thing if you consistently choose it.

Eating food may be easier and more pleasurable, but it's probably not the better option.

It definitely isn't if we're talking about eating a lot and bingeing.

Now, I get that when you're feeling a strong urge, there's not a lot of rational thinking going on. It's more of a challenge to think rationally like this and think things through.

But, it's still worth trying, along with making a conscious decision to allow yourself to feel your urge.

I never want you to think that just thinking through until the end is always the only thing you need to do.

Sometimes it is, especially if it's a time when you're feeling a less intense urge and it's a case of "just one more," "okay, just one more" that keeps going until you've had like 10 one mores. In those cases it's easier to think it through.

But when the urge is stronger, the work of consciously allowing your urge needs to be done on top of thinking about your options.

Just know that you do have options. Eating a lot of food isn't the only one.

And in the big picture, when you tell the whole story, it's probably not the better one.

Alright, so make sure you have options for pleasure besides eating, first and foremost. Brainstorm ideas and try something a few times to see if you like it.

Then tell yourself why it is the better option when eating is also presented as one.

I'll talk to you next time, bye bye!