THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #197: Why You Still Feel Urges to Binge Eat

Hi! How are you? Great? Great.

Let's talk about those dang binge urges.

All your binges are preceded by an urge so if you didn't feel them then you wouldn't binge. It's that simple.

But, once you've started feeling them, either as a repercussion of overly restrictive dieting or through habit, it can be a challenge to make it so you don't feel them anymore.

A challenge, but not impossible. It's absolutely possible.

So to do that, you first have to know why you're still feeling them, even after working on not binge eating for awhile, because if you don't know why they're happening, then you're not going to be able to find a suitable solution.

When you don't know the root cause then you might be working on solutions that aren't addressing the actual problem.

It's like if your car is making a noise, the mechanic isn't going to be able to stop the noise unless they figure out the cause of the noise.

You're not going to be able to stop your binge eating unless you know what's causing it.

There may be only one reason, there may be several, but you gotta know what they are.

So today, we're gonna get to the bottom of this and I'm going to share with you the top reasons why you might still be feeling urges and how you're going to address those reasons why.

You ready? Here we go.

The two main reasons why you might still be feeling urges to binge are because you're still seeing bingeing as something important, beneficial, or useful, or, you are overly restricting your eating so you can control your weight.

It's one or both of those reasons and I'm going to break them down even more for you so you can see how you might be doing those things.

First, overly restricting your eating in ways that you don't want to and that isn't actually useful which you are most likely doing to control your weight.

The restricting you're doing is either you're not allowing yourself to eat certain foods that you like or you're not allowing yourself to eat when you're hungry.

Both of those create urges but they're different kinds of urges.

If you're not allowing yourself to eat certain foods that you like, and that you want to eat, and you're not doing it for medical reasons like allergies or intolerances, but because you think you'll binge on them or think you'll gain weight if you eat them, you're creating a mental restriction. You're going to create deprivation, feeling restricted, maybe frustrated or angry or self-pity.

The more you deny yourself of what you want, the more of those feelings you will feel and as you've probably seen first hand, a lot of deprivation is likely to lead to rebellion. What was once a desire for the food has grown into an urge, an urgent, strong desire because the deprivation of what you're wanting has increased.

So the solution here, is to allow yourself to eat the foods you want to eat.

I know this might feel scary for you and it might be challenging when you have diet mentality lurking around in your mind but, if the reason why you're feeling urges is because you're not allowing yourself to eat the foods you like, then eat the foods you like, so you'll feel less urges and in the long-run, will binge less.

Then there's the other way you might be overly restricting yourself. By not eating when you're hungry.

And this isn't not eating because of a reason like you're in a meeting, or food isn't available right there in that moment, or you're meeting someone for dinner in like an hour so you're going to wait.

This is for reasons like, you're trying to lose weight or are trying to not gain weight after a binge or after overeating.

You're not eating when you're hungry so you can make up for the extra eating you did.

You feel the hunger, and you might try to ignore it, distract from it, or maybe chew gum or drink a calorie-free beverage to try and trick the hunger.

You want to hold off on eating so you'll eat less calories.

But what will happen then, especially if you do this for a long period of time, is you'll create a biological urge.

Your brain will sense that it and the body aren't getting adequate fuel and will urge you to eat. And it will urge you to eat a lot to make up for what you didn't eat and to prepare for this happening again in the future.

You brain doesn't like being under fueled so it's going to stock up in case under fueling happens again.

So when you under eat, your brain is going to react. It's going to urge you to eat and eat a lot.

So the solution here, is to eat enough food. Eat when you're hungry. If you ignore your hunger, your brain is going to come for you.

Obey your body's hunger signals and you won't create those biological urges.

Okay? So those are the overly restrictive behaviors that might be causing your urges to keep on coming.

Then there's seeing bingeing as something important, beneficial, or useful.

And you might not even see bingeing that way but, you might see *eating* that way, and obviously eating is important, beneficial, and useful because its fuels our bodies and provides us with some pleasure but what I mean is that you see eating or bingeing as more important, beneficial, and useful than it's intended to be because it's how you handle your emotions or how you experience pleasure, fun, or enjoyment.

You're thinking eating all that food will make you feel better, will calm you down, soothe you, comfort you, relax you, entertain you. That's how it's beneficial and useful to you.

And if eating is the only way you know how to handle your emotions and eating is your main source of pleasure, then eating is going to be extremely important for you, way more important than it would be to someone who sees food as something that is mostly fuel and sometimes is solely pleasurable.

So, if eating is how you handle your emotions, then when you're feeling an emotion that is uncomfortable and that you don't want to feel, you're going to want food, you'll desire it because you've made this association between feelings and food. And the more urgent it is for you to make the feeling go away, the stronger your desire will be, so strong it becomes an urge.

So the solution here, learn how to handle your emotions in different ways, in ways that don't involve you eating to numb, relieve, calm, or soothe them.

Now, you can do an activity that could help you do that.

Like if you're feeling stressed, moving your body can be a helpful way to relieve it.

But, the most helpful way I know how to handle emotions is by feeling them. You allow yourself to feel them. You process through them and go through them and they will dissipate eventually. They're not going to last forever but you have to be patient.

When you're eating, you're most likely looking for the quick way out. Take the slower way out. I promise you there will be an out, your feeling is not going to be never-ending but again, be patient with it and allow your feeling to be there.

Be willing to feel uncomfortable.

Now, if you're wanting something to do, something fun, pleasurable, entertaining, or wanting enjoyment, and you don't have anything planned or any ideas for what you can do, and eating is what you usually do, then that's going to be where your mind goes. You're going to start thinking about what you can eat to give yourself something to do.

Your urging for something fun, enjoyable, pleasurable to do becomes an urging for food since that's what you associate fun with, just like I talked about with emotions.

So the solution here, is to incorporate other sources of pleasure into your life. And be deliberate about doing them.

Plan for how you want to spend your free time and your time after eating. You don't have to be super specific and structured but at least have options ready.

And remember, like I talked about back in episode #187, what you want to do may not be as highly pleasurable as eating, maybe it will be but, if it's not, tell yourself why it's the better option.

So those are the main reasons why you're still feeling urges.

You are overly restricting your eating by not allowing foods or not allowing yourself to eat when you're hungry, or you're still seeing bingeing as something important, beneficial, or useful, because it's how you handle your emotions or how you experience pleasure.

So you're going to figure out which you're doing so you know what you need to focus on the most.

And then you're going to make sure you're eating when you're hungry, allowing yourself to eat the foods you like, are allowing yourself to feel your emotions, and are finding pleasure in other things.

You're going to figure this out. You will stop feeling urges to binge.

But first, figure out why they are still coming.

Bye bye.