

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #203 Practicing Thinking Thoughts

Hey! How is it goin'? And what have you been thinking lately?

Have you been thinking thoughts that are going to help you to stop binge eating? Thoughts that will keep you binge eating? A mix of both?

Do you even know which are which?

Sometimes people don't even know that some of their thoughts are making it more challenging for them to stop binge eating.

And they also might not even know that they have options when it comes to what they think.

Pointing these out is something that I do in coaching all the time, where I show people how some of their thoughts are creating urges and making it hard for them to not give in to urges and I show them what their other options are.

And this is important to know because everything you do begins with a thought, even if you don't recognize it.

Your thoughts will cause feelings. And once you feel a feeling, you will be driven to take an action.

Your feelings don't *make* you do anything, they don't force you to take action but, when you feel the feeling you feel, you'll feel driven to do something.

Like if you feel desire, you'll feel driven to get what you desire.

If you feel shame, you'll feel driven to hide or to deflect.

If you feel anger, you'll feel driven to yell or hit.

So if there are actions you don't want to feel driven to take, then you'll need to manage how you feel by managing how you think.

Now, you're not going to be in total control of all the feelings and thoughts you experience but, there is a lot of opportunity for being in control of a lot them.

Just the other day, I was coaching with one of my group members and there were a few times she said something and as soon as she said it, she reframed it. She heard herself say something she knew wasn't useful and redirected to a more useful way of saying it. It was so cool to see her doing this, noticing what she said and choosing a different option.

And this is something we're all capable of doing, some times more easily than others of course, and you don't even have to be talking out loud to do it. You can just do it in your own mind as you're thinking.

You can catch yourself thinking something that's not useful to think, that's going to make you feel bad or drive actions you don't want to be taking and you can reframe and choose to think differently.

You can hear yourself say you can't stop binge eating and tell yourself you can.

You can hear yourself say you're unworthy and tell yourself you are worthy.

You can hear yourself say you're a failure and tell yourself you just made a mistake and you're going to learn and do better,

And what's really cool about doing this is that the more often you think that new, more useful thought on purpose and deliberately, the more you will think it effortlessly.

You're basically training your brain to think in this new way.

You're showing your brain a new way, and you're choosing it, and over time, your brain will be more and more on board.

You see, your brain doesn't really like to change.

Your brain likes to have habits since habitual thinking uses less energy than new thinking.

But, little by little, you can make that new thinking into habitual thinking.

You can become a person who thinks differently than you have been and that's what is going to create so much change in yourself, how you feel, and what you do.

If you've listened to any of the success stories on this podcast, you've heard each of them talk about this.

How they think about things that were related to their binge eating has changed.

How they think about their feelings, their urges, themselves, their bodies, food, eating a lot of food, has changed.

And that change didn't just happen, they made that change happen.

Sometimes it's as simple as finding a new thought option that you believe and that's your new belief in the instant you found it.

We've all experienced this when we're reading news or information and we gain a new opinion of something right then and there when we read it.

But sometimes it's not so quick and easy.

You've probably had experiences where you hear me say something on the podcast and it makes sense and intellectually you understand it and believe it but, your brain just isn't letting go of a competing, habitual thought that's stopping you from fully grabbing hold of this new thought.

And that's totally normal.

This happens to all of us.

It just happened to me recently when I was having a discussion with another coach where I was intellectually understanding something but couldn't fully wrap my mind around it.

Then she and I talked it through and now I'm on board.

So, you're going to uncover new ways of looking at and thinking about things and although you may get it, you may not be fully on board at a first and that's okay.

You'll get on board by practicing.

Now, when I tell people they're going to practice their thoughts, sometimes they're confused. What does it mean to practice thoughts and what does that look like?

It's just not something most of us are used to doing.

We're more used to practicing actions.

And it's very similar.

Think about if you're practicing piano.

You're doing the motions over and over.

You're practicing connecting the notes on the sheet music to what your fingers are doing on the keys.

Or if you're practicing throwing a ball, you're doing the motions over and over, paying attention to where the ball goes and adjusting your movements or your focus to get better aim.

Whatever it is you want to be doing better, you do it over and over.

And the same goes for your thought practice.

You think the thoughts you want to be thinking over and over.

But, there's a very important caveat that you need to know.

If you're practicing a thought that you don't believe and you're trying to fake it til you make it, this isn't going to work.

Your brain's gonna call BS and it won't stick.

This is why it didn't work if you've ever tried positive mantras and repeated the same thing to yourself day after day and nothing changed.

You weren't practicing something you already believed even a little bit.

For example, if you're trying to practice thinking your body is beautiful and you don't believe it at all, it's not going to stick. Your brain will reject that thought.

You won't feel the feeling you're wanting to feel when you think that thought and therefore, won't feel driven to take the actions you're wanting to take since the feeling isn't there.

So if you're going to practice thinking a certain thought, make sure you believe it even if just a little bit.

Make sure there's some belief in it.

And then this is what the actual practice looks like.

You think the thought on purpose over and over.

You can think it in your mind, you can say it out loud, you can write it down.

However you do it, you are repeating the thought in your head.

You are basically memorizing it and rehearsing it.

And when you do this, you're strengthening the neural pathway in your brain connected to that thought.

Which basically means you're making it easier for you to think that way without putting in effort like you have been when you're practicing.

Now, the question I then get asked is how often should you be practicing?

And there is no right answer here but as with anything, the more you practice, the sooner you get better at it.

So practice every day. Practice several times a day.

Set reminders on your phone for you to practice.

Do habit stacking where you practice while doing other things you already habitually do like brushing your teeth. Practice your thought when you brush your teeth.

It only takes a few seconds to practice thinking your new thought.

Make time for it and remind yourself to do it.

And not only are you going to practice in that way, you're going to practice by doing what my group member that I mentioned earlier has been doing.

You're going to be aware of the old way of thinking that you're wanting to let go of and you're going to practice thinking in your new way right in that moment when you hear the old thought.

You're not going to allow that old thought to drive your actions, you're going to redirect to the new one that will make you feel a feeling that will drive the actions you want to be taking.

Here's an example.

Say you're at the grocery store and your brain presents this thought that you've thought so many times – "That looks so good, I really want that but, I can't eat it."

How are you going to feel if you're thinking that? Deprived? Restricted? Sad?

And if you just allow that thought to exist while creating those feelings, what actions will those feelings drive for you? Maybe you'll ruminate about this, maybe you'll keep thinking about the food, maybe you'll be mopey, maybe you'll eat to numb how you're feeling.

But imagine if you heard that thought in your brain and then practiced thinking your new thought – "Yes it looks good but I'm going to choose to not eat it. "

When you stop thinking you can't have it and tell yourself you're choosing not to, how would you feel then?

Maybe empowered because you're making it your choice, not something you think you're not allowed to do. Maybe you'd feel content, calm, self-assured.

And if you're feeling those ways, you'll let it go and move on, no big deal.

Or, maybe there is no good reason that you can think of for you to choose to not eat it so your new thought is actually, "Yes it looks good and I do want it so I'm going to get it."

And you could feel similar feelings, maybe empowered because you're choosing something you truly do want to choose, or maybe content, excited, calm.

And when you feel those feelings while you eat that food, you won't be eating in a deprived, restricted, guilty, fast and sneaky way but in a way where you can enjoy it fully and get full satisfaction from it because you chose it and you have unconditional permission.

You have an opportunity to feel and act how you want to feel and act and it's all going to stem from how you're choosing to think.

So be intentional about it.

Practice thinking the way you want to be thinking.

You change your thinking all the time. You change your opinion about things, you change what you want, you change how you perceive things when you're not even trying to.

But, with the thoughts involved in your binge eating, you're going to try and you're going to put in effort and you're going to make the change happen.

One thought at a time, you're going to change your thought habits.

Not all of them, your brain is still going to offer up some of your old thoughts once in a while and some new unuseful thoughts and that's okay.

You're just going to practice noticing and redirecting.

So daily, practice thinking new thoughts you already believe even just a little so you can make them your habitual thoughts.

Take charge of your brain and it's thoughts.

Have a great week, bye bye.