

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #213: Weighing Yourself While Working on Stopping Binge Eating

Hi! Let's talk about weighing yourself when you're working on stopping binge eating.

Should you? Is it okay to? Will it have a negative impact?

I totally understand why people ask those questions but I think that an even more important question for you to ask yourself is, what is the purpose of weighing yourself?

When you're working on stopping binge eating, why do you want to weigh yourself?

Sure you probably want to see if you've lost or gained weight, that's why we all weigh, right?

But why do you want to know that?

I'm guessing it's for one of three reasons.

One, you want to see if you're making progress or not.

Two, you haven't fully put weight loss on hold yet.

Three, you're using your weight to determine how you will eat and think.

First, the progress reason.

So many of us have used the number of the scale as a progress gauge for such a long time.

“Want to know if you’re doing well? Step on the scale!”

But there are so many more ways to determine progress and the scale is not the best way to gauge progress with binge eating.

You might be making amazing progress while maintaining or even while gaining.

You might be gaining because you are being less restrictive with your eating, which is so helpful for stopping binge eating, and maybe you’re overeating a little too much but, the out of control binge eating is greatly decreasing and that’s amazing progress.

You might be maintaining simply because decreasing bingeing doesn’t always result in weight loss and there could be a few different factors at play that are causing that result.

And here’s the kicker. You might be losing weight but, you’re overly restricting yourself and then using willpower to not binge. Now, not bingeing is great, but, you’re not progressing at stopping overly restricting yourself and you’re not progressing at learning how to allow urges. You’re just continuing to overly restrict and use willpower instead, which are not going to be helpful in the long run.

The scale can’t show you all the progress that you’re making or not making.

This is because the most important changes that are happening or not happening are in your mind, they’re the changes in how you’re thinking about yourself, your emotions, your body, food, binge eating.

So you may be making all of these mental changes but the scale isn’t moving or is going up. Are you then you make that mean that you’re failing?

Don’t stop giving yourself credit for all that you’ve worked on and changed just because the number is what it is.

And, you might be making no sustainable, useful, helpful changes that will create long-term success and the number on the scale does go down.

My weight went down countless times when I was binge eating but I wasn’t making any real, helpful changes. The number on the scale really meant nothing when it came to my binge eating except that I was able to use my determination and willpower for an extended time. And that’s not what I needed to be doing.

So stop using the scale as a way to determine if you’re making progress with your binge eating. It’s unnecessary and most of time, inaccurate.

But you know what is accurate? Is you noticing how your thoughts are changing, how new thoughts you want to be thinking are becoming more natural for you to think, how often you’ve allowed yourself to feel feelings and urges instead of eating to make them go away, how often you’re allowing yourself to eat foods that used to be forbidden, and there’s so many more things that you can look at to see that

you're actually making progress toward a binge-free life that isn't going to take a ton of effort to sustain.

And I actually have an episode you can check out where I go into more detail on this topic, #113 Determining Your Progress.

Next, let's talk about putting that weight loss goal on hold.

You've probably heard me say it before, and pretty much anyone else who helps with binge eating, that stopping binge eating is going to be way easier if you aren't trying to lose weight too.

Stopping binge eating and losing weight are two separate goals to be worked on at two separate times, with stopping binge eating happening first.

One of the main reasons why is because most people have the idea in their head that in order to lose weight they have to cut out foods, and eat foods they don't really want to eat, and be hungry more often and all the things the diet industry has told us over the years. And these things are things that perpetuate binge eating.

Now, a quick side note here, for those of you who are curious about what I just said since I do know a lot of you do want to lose weight eventually, to lose weight you don't have to cut out foods, and eat foods you don't really want to eat, and be hungry more often and when my group members move on to weight loss, when they're ready and if they want to, we make sure that they're not losing weight this way. There's a better way that makes it a not so miserable experience as most of us have experienced when trying to lose weight at one time or another.

So, put the weight loss on hold.

Now, some of you think you are but you haven't fully. You're still kinda working on the weight loss goal. It's like you're trying to sneak it in as soon as you feel good about your binge eating or when you have an event or something coming up.

That's why you step on the scale, to see if this little side goal is progressing along.

So if you are using the scale, check to see if it's because you're trying to sneak in some weight loss.

And if you are, do yourself a favor and put the weight loss goal on hold for now and focus on what needs to be done to stop binge eating.

And I have an episode about that topic too, #10 Losing Weight While Binge Eating.

And thirdly, and this is a big one, using your weight to determine how you will eat and think.

What I mean by that is that you're stepping on the scale to see if you should eat less today or if you are okay with eating how you planned or even if you have earned a binge day.

You're also doing it to see if you should think well of yourself or not.

You make decisions for yourself once you step on the scale.

Your weight is a main determinant for how you're going to think and eat, instead of determining how you're going to think by you choosing how you're going to think and instead of eating according to your true wants and your body's wants.

And so much of this comes down to how you think about your weight.

Your weight is just a number. It's a circumstance, a fact, data.

Then you have thoughts about your weight.

You attach meaning to it, things like, "This means I've been good," "I'm failing," "I'm okay," "I'm out of control," "I'm gross," "I'm attractive," and so many more things you could make your weight mean.

The number on the scale doesn't make you think that way, you do.

Now, sometime those negative thoughts may pop up and yeah, you didn't choose to think them in that moment.

But you choose how you respond when they appear.

Do you agree and then repeat them over and over again all day, solidifying your habit of thinking that way?

Or do you respond with a more useful thought, one that isn't going to make you feel like crap about yourself?

We're not in 100% control of every thought that pops into our heads but we have so much control over what we do with those thoughts.

And it's really important that you check your thoughts about gaining weight and I'm going to reference one more episode here, #177 Your Thoughts About Gaining Weight if you want to go more in depth about that.

You don't need to know the number on the scale before you decide what you're going to think about yourself today or how you're going to eat today.

You can decide simply based on what you want to think about yourself, what you want to eat today, and what your body wants you to eat today.

Instead of relying on the scale to help you decide, rely on yourself.

Now, with all of this being said that I've said in this entire episode, I'm not telling you to stop weighing yourself.

You're welcome to do it if you want to.

But know what your reasons are for doing it, what your purpose is for doing it, and see if it aligns with what needs to be done to stop binge eating and if it's actually helpful for you.

Maybe it is helpful in some ways. Maybe it's not. Maybe it has no effect whatsoever.

But it's important to know that whether it's helpful, or not, or has no effect, is all determined by how you think about the scale and the number on it and yourself when you see the number.

The effect you get is going to be determined by how you think about the number, not the number itself.

You're going to think a thought about it, then you're going to feel a feeling, and then you're going to take action.

Your behaviors are driven by your feelings which are caused by your thoughts.

So be aware of what your thoughts are.

Alright, let's recap on this.

If you're questioning weighing yourself while working on stopping binge eating, what are you thinking is the purpose of weighing? And is it going to help you to weigh?

It's not going to reflect *so much* of the progress you're making.

Weight loss shouldn't even be worked on while you're working on stopping binge eating.

And you don't need the scale to help you decide how you're going to think and eat that day. You're going to decide for yourself, you're going to listen to your body, and you're not going to use the number on the scale as an excuse to binge or overly restrict yourself.

So that is weighing yourself while working on stopping binge eating and I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye.