

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #215: How to Follow Through on a Decision to Not Eat

Hi! Let's talk about following through on and honoring the decisions you make for yourself with food.

So much of the time, you really do have the best of intentions for yourself and that's why you make the decisions you do.

You decide what you're going to eat and what you're not.

You decide how much you're going to eat.

You decide when you're going to and when you're not.

And sometimes, you do exactly what you decided and give yourself credit for that. Give yourself a lot of credit actually because why not? Why not be so proud of yourself for the times when you do what you say you're going to do?

Too many of you dismiss them instead, telling yourself that it's not a big deal, that it's what you just should be doing so it's not celebration worthy, or you say "yeah but, I didn't do it yesterday" and start putting your focus on the fails.

Stop it. Lift yourself up, celebrate yourself for even the smallest of wins because it feels good to.

Make yourself feel good.

And then there are the times when you don't do what you said you'd do.

You made the decision ahead of time but then in the moment you made a new decision, to not follow through on and honor your original decision.

Say you woke up in the morning and said you won't eat after dinner if you weren't hungry.

But then the day was stressful and by the end of the day, you were exhausted, and you wanted to relax and what came to your mind was watching tv and eating. You considered your decision from the morning and said screw it, you'd do it tomorrow. Then decided to eat.

Or, you didn't even think about your decision you previously made and just decided to eat the food.

How you handle decision making is an important part of the stopping binge eating process because every bite of food you eat is being eaten because you decide to eat it.

You decided to eat that food after dinner.

It didn't just happen. Even if you don't notice that the decision making process is happening, it is.

You decide to walk to where the food is. You decide to open the door or cabinet. You decide what food you're going to eat. You decide how much you'll eat with each bite. You decide to eat another bite.

And when it comes to stopping binge eating, there are so many decisions you make every day that are either going to move you closer to or farther away from your ultimate goal.

You're deciding to feel your emotions or to eat to avoid and numb them.

You're deciding to give in to your urge or not to.

You're deciding if you're going to eat when you're hungry or not.

You're deciding if you're going to eat when you're not hungry or not.

You're deciding if you're going to call a food, your body, or yourself good or bad.

You're deciding how you talk to yourself.

You're deciding if you're going to say "screw it" to your goals or stay committed to doing what it takes.

You're deciding if you're going to stop eating or eat one more.

And you when you make a decision ahead of time about what you're going to do later, you later decide if you're going to follow through on that decision or decide to do something different.

I hear from people all the time that it's hard for them to honor their decisions and so today I want to talk about why that is.

It seems simple enough, right?

Just do what you decided to do. Stop making more decisions for yourself and stop getting stuck in indecision and just honor the original decision.

You said you wouldn't eat at work when you are obviously procrastinating and are not hungry, so just don't do it instead of sitting there going back and forth, "Should I? Shouldn't I? Maybe just one. No, you said you wouldn't."

So much precious mental energy is used up when you don't just do what you decided and you start considering other options and don't make a final decision for awhile.

But there are reasons why you don't just do what you decided.

One reason is because there may be an easier option.

You've made a decision and when the time comes to honor it, there's something easier available to you.

Say you decided that you're not going to eat any surprise food that comes into the office or into your home. But then someone brings something and not eating it is harder than eating it. So you decide to do the easier thing and eat it.

When you're faced with an easier option, it can be hard to not choose it.

But it can be easier to choose the harder thing if you have a really good reason to choose it.

If your reason to say no to the food isn't compelling, if your reason to say no isn't that important to you, then you're not going to feel driven to do it if it's not something you're used to doing and is therefore hard for you.

There's a difference between, "I'm saying no to the food because I shouldn't eat it," and "I'm saying no to the food because I don't want to feel too full, I want to be hungry for dinner, and I want to practice allowing urges so I can become an urge allowing master!"

The second reason is so much more compelling. At least, I think it is. And if it's not to you, find reasons that are for whatever decisions you are making around food that are intending to help you have your ideal eating habits.

Do the hard thing and have a really good reason to do it.

The easier option may be easier but following through on the hard option will be so much better for you in the end.

Another reason why it can be hard to not choose your original decision is because there might be discomfort involved.

You might have desire for something else.

Just like the example I mentioned a moment ago, you have desire for that food that someone brought.

Now you have competing desires, desire to eat it and desire to not.

That's not a comfortable place to be in.

And then when you say no, because you're going to follow through on the decision you made to not eat it, you might still have lingering desire for eating.

Just because you make a decision and decide to honor the decision and you have good reasons to honor it, doesn't mean you're not going to still feel desire for the other thing.

And it can be uncomfortable to want without having, especially when what you decided to have, the not eating, isn't giving you an immediate reward. You gotta wait for it.

We've all experienced those moments when we say no and after a little bit we're content, and so proud of ourselves and feel really good about the decision.

Before that happens, discomfort happens.

If you're not willing to go through it, you won't be willing to follow through on the harder decision.

And I think it's important to see that eating would end your discomfort because there would be no more desire but later, regret may show up, and desire to be eating differently than you have been might show up, and discomfort of other kinds might show up.

So you can take the quick way out of discomfort by choosing the easy decision that relieves the discomfort quickly or, you choose the hard decision because you have fantastic reasons to and you can go through any discomfort that decision might create, knowing it will be so worth it in the end.

The biggest obstacle in decision making with food is discomfort.

You don't want to feel the unanswered desire, the deprivation, or even the self-pity.

But know that these are not required.

They're only there because of how you're thinking about the decision you're *not* making.

If you think you're missing out, it's not fair, you can't have it, thoughts like that, you're making it so much harder for you to follow through on what you truly want to be doing.

But if you love your decision and you see following through on this decision as something amazing you're doing for yourself, then you won't feel so sad about not doing the other thing.

If in your mind not eating that food is a way better idea than eating it and exactly what you want, then it's so much easier to do it.

And, you won't feel so much discomfort when it comes time to honor the decision.

You won't have a discomfort obstacle standing in your way because you're not creating desire for something else or feeling bad about not choosing the something else.

You just feel desire for and feel good about what you are choosing.

So here's what you can do to help you follow through on and honor your decisions about food.

When you're making your decision, ahead of the moment when the decision will be implemented, know why you're making the decision you're making. You can also anticipate why you might not want to honor that decision and prepare yourself for how you'll handle it.

Then when it comes time to honor the decision, remind yourself of that why, do what you prepared if you need to, and if any discomfort comes up, feel it, knowing that it will end and you will be okay, actually better than okay because you'll have done something amazing for yourself.

Make a firm decision to honor your decision, don't second guess, don't question it, don't try to negotiate, and don't let anything stop you from getting what you truly want.

You got this.