

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #216: Fail Plan

Hi! Today I'm going to talk to you about preparing to fail because let's be realistic, it's probably going to happen.

Let me be clear, failing at stopping binge eating isn't going to happen, I have no doubt you will succeed but, when you're working on stopping binge eating you are going to fail, and this normal, and part of the process.

It's normal to binge when you're working on stopping binge eating.

It is highly unlikely that you're going to decide to work on it, immediately learn everything you need to know and be perfect at not bingeing right away.

That definitely didn't happen for me and I don't expect it to happen for you either.

Now, I don't want you to hear this and freak out, imagining how awful it will be to fail.

Because when you do, when you are thinking failing is terrible, not only are you going to be resistant to failing but resistant to doing something that might result in failing.

You won't even try because you don't want failing to be an option on the table.

But when we really think about it, what's so bad about failing?

Okay, so if you binge you're going to feel physically bad, maybe really bad depending, and of course no one wants to experience that.

But it will pass. It'll take some time, maybe hours, maybe a day, but your body will process through what you ate and work to get back to physically feeling neutral again.

It's not forever. It will pass and you'll be okay.

Anything that happens when you fail, is temporary because you're going to make it be temporary.

You're not going to fail and then surrender and do nothing or fail and then intentionally keep failing.

You're going to get back up and try again. Or, in some cases, move on to something else that might work for you.

Like, if you've tried different diets to stop binge eating and you keep failing at stopping, you get yourself back up and move on to a new method, like my Stop Binge Eating Program for example, and get to work on that.

When you fail, there will be next steps but what a lot of people don't consider is what those next steps are.

They just imagine the devastating fail and that's it.

They also might imagine it and then think it's over, they can't do it, they're a failure.

And they might also imagine it and think about all the feelings they'll feel – the disappointment, sadness, shame, frustration, and others.

And here's the thing, those thoughts and feelings might happen.

But again, they'll be temporary because you're not going to allow yourself to just wallow in them.

You're not going to just let your mind swirl around in negativity forever, repeating the same thoughts over and over that create the same negative feelings over and over.

You going to allow the feelings at first, let them happen, and then you're going to get to work on changing how you think about your failure, and yourself, and your future.

And this is where the fail plan comes in.

You don't have to wait until you fail to figure out how you're going to handle the fail.

You can decide that right now.

And when you do, it can help ease your resistance to it.

So often people are like, "If I fail I'm going to feel so embarrassed," and that's the end of the story.

But it doesn't have to be the end and it's actually not.

Embarrassment isn't the end.

There's more.

So let's decide now what that "more" is going to look like.

If it were me, this is what my fail plan would be.

"If I fail, I'm going to feel so embarrassed. I'm going to allow myself to feel it and just be embarrassed for a bit and I can do that. Then I'm going to do some thought work to move out of embarrassment and feel accepting of what happened. I can forgive my mistake and see it as just part of the process and work on not making it mean anything about me as a person."

So in that example, I'm planning for what I'll do with my embarrassment. Getting to that end part feels so relieving and I'm showing myself that there will be a light at the end of the fail, at the end of the embarrassment.

That feels so much better than just saying "I'll feel so embarrassed" and that's it.

Here's another example.

A fail plan for a binge.

"If I binge, I'm going to feel physically awful but I'll be okay because that will pass. My body will be okay. I'll probably also start thinking that I'll never be able to stop binge eating because that's what I usually think after I binge. My belief in myself drops way down. And if that happens, I'm going to encourage myself to keep going. I'm going to remind myself of the times when I had long streaks of not bingeing. I'm going to tell myself that I'm working on it and it's possible for me because that is what I truly believe. That's what I believe right now and I know that if I binge it doesn't mean I can't stop. It means I'm still figuring it out. So If I binge, that's what I'm going to tell myself."

So, the plan there is a plan for thoughts. It's, "If I think this, I'm going to tell myself this." And I'm planning to tell myself things I already believe to be true, not some airy fairy pie in the sky stuff. I'm ready and prepared with my encouraging self-talk and it's something I came up with for myself, not something someone else just handed to me.

And I think that's an important thing to make sure you're doing with any self-talk. You're making it your own. When I offer thoughts to my group members, which I sometimes do, I encourage them to make them feel authentic to them so, switch out the words, say it in a different way, whatever feels right. You don't always have to take my thoughts, or anyone else's, word for word, I mean, you can, I've done it but, know that whatever you think will work best for you if you are 100% on board.

Now, I just want to clarify with that bingeing example I just gave that you're not excusing yourself ahead of time. It's not, "well, if I binge everything will be alright so it's not a big deal."

No, what it is is you preparing for a worst case scenario so you'll be willing to risk it.

You're deciding ahead of time how you will handle a fail if it happens but are not purposefully deciding to fail.

And you're doing it so you're not faced with the unknown but instead are making it known what the aftereffects of the fail will look like, because you're going to create the aftereffects. You're not going to let your brain do whatever it wants to, you're going to manage it, manage your thoughts and your feelings so you move in the direction you want to go in.

So when you anticipate that a fail might happen, big or small, and you notice yourself feeling resistant to doing what could result in a fail, get to work on planning for the fail.

What are you imagining will happen?

And what will you do if it does?

And then what? And then what?

Go as far as you need to to feel okay about failing.

Show yourself what you will do to get yourself to okay after the fail.

You don't need to want to fail but, you can be more open to the idea of it happening.

Which will then make you more open to the idea of trying something new that could result in a fail...and that could also result in great success too.

You can create your own safety net, so you know you're not just going to crash down.

You've got you, you're going to take care of yourself if you fail.

Plan for how you'll do it.

Alright, bye bye.