

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #217: Slowing Down Your Eating

Hi! Let's talk about eating more slowly.

I was actually pretty excited when I saw that this topic was on my episode list for this week because just last night, I went through this exact process that I'm going to teach you today.

I was at someone's house and we were watching a movie and eating nachos.

At first, I was eating them and enjoying them and all was good.

But then I noticed myself eating a little more quickly, and I noticed my brain urging me to eat more quickly.

I also then thought back to all the times when I binged on tortilla chips. Not even nachos or chips dipped in anything, just the chips straight from the bag.

I thought it was so interesting that I still get this urge to eat them quickly after all this work I've done on my eating and that I get the urge with the chips but not other things.

Why? I really have no idea. I mean, yeah, they taste good but there are other things that taste good too and I don't feel that way when I eat them.

We actually also ate popcorn with the nachos, and I didn't feel that way eating the popcorn and both were salty and corn-based.

It's so interesting to me. I used to binge on both and both are delicious but I don't know what the difference is.

Anyway, there I was, noticing what was happening in my mind and with my hand and mouth and what I didn't do, was let it continue.

I slowed myself down, I ate a few more chips more slowly, and then I stopped eating altogether.

And in this episode, I want to walk you through what I did, and what I didn't do, that helped me to do that.

I know that so many people, when they binge, eat really fast. They're trying to get the food into their mouth as quickly as possible.

That urge you're feeling, that urgency to eat, is driving you to eat fast because remember, your feelings are what drive your actions and not only will your feelings drive you to take certain actions, they'll also influence *how* you take action.

That urge isn't just going to drive you to eat, it's going to drive you to eat fast, and the same goes for eating when you feel rushed, pressured, guilty, panicked, feelings like those.

They'll affect *how* you eat too.

And sometimes you might start eating fast from the get go and other times, there may be a build up of speed.

Either way, you have the power to change your speed and to slow yourself down and the sooner you take action on your speed, the easier will be, which I think is the case for most things.

Like with emotions. It's easier to feel less intense emotions than a build up of emotions so the sooner you notice you're feeling an emotion and the sooner you start to manage your response to it, the easier it will be.

Now, in the story I told you about last night with the tortilla chips, let me start by telling you what I didn't do, that I used to do, and that a lot of you do too.

First, I wasn't oblivious, I wasn't zoned out, I wasn't unaware.

Having awareness of what you're doing is always the first step toward change.

If you don't notice what you're doing then you can't change it.

It is so important that you pay attention while you're eating. Pay attention to the food, to your body, to your mind, to what you're doing.

Now, I'm not saying that you need to be 100% focused on only those things.

Last night, I wasn't. I was talking to the person I was with and I was also watching a movie while eating.

But, I made sure to shift my focus from one thing to another. I didn't only pay attention to the movie, or to the person, or to the food.

I moved from one to the other.

And I'll tell you, when I noticed what was happening with my eating, I kept my focus there for a minute or two or however long it was because that was what was most important to me in that moment.

The movie can wait and if I miss something, I can ask what just happened or rewind.

If how you're eating is important to you, pay attention to it.

So that's the first "don't." Don't *not* pay attention.

And the second don't, is don't freak out when you notice you're eating fast.

What I didn't do when I noticed how quickly I was eating was think I was out of control, that I couldn't slow down, or that it's just too good.

That's what I used to think and I know it's what a lot of you think too.

You look at your fast eating as something you have no control over and make it mean things it doesn't mean.

You absolutely can slow yourself down.

It's like noticing you're driving fast. You don't just say, "well, I can't slow down, I'm out of control."

No, you check what you're doing and intentionally slow yourself down.

Eating fast doesn't mean you're out of control and as soon as you tell yourself you're out of control, guess what's going to happen.

You're going to feel out of control, you'll feel powerless, and you'll just let it continue to happen.

Same thing when you tell yourself you can't slow down.

If you think you can't, you won't try to.

And if you're only thinking about how good the food tastes, that's not going to be helpful either.

Oh, and what I also didn't do was I didn't think back to all the times I binged on tortilla chips and start thinking that I binge on tortilla chips. I didn't bring that past eating into the present.

I did remember back to when I binged on them, so many times, but I didn't make it mean anything about how I eat presently.

It was merely an observation.

So often people bring all that past eating BS into the present and decide it's going to happen again.

I've binged so many times on tortilla chips and now I'm eating them fast so this means I'm going to binge.

No! You're not. You're going to do it differently this time.

Just because you binged on them before doesn't mean you're going to binge on them this time.

Just because you drove fast on this road before doesn't mean you'll do it again this time.

This time, you're going to consciously slow down.

You're not gonna think that you're out of control, because you're not, or that you can't stop, because you can, that you're going to binge, because that's not inevitable, and you're not going to only think about how good the food tastes.

You're gonna think about slowing down and changing your speed.

Once I noticed how quickly I was eating and that my brain was urging me to eat quickly, I didn't freak out.

Instead, I made a decision.

I decided I would slow down.

Now, of course it's not as easy as just deciding and it happens.

If you haven't listened to my recent episode about following through on decisions, episode number 215, I go into more detail there.

But now let me walk you through exactly what I did last night and what the "do's" look like.

The first do, as I said before, is having awareness of what's happening.

I noticed my speed and what was happening in my mind and body. I noticed the feeling I felt, that urge, that drive to eat faster.

Then, I thought about my tortilla chip binges of the past but I didn't make that mean anything about my chip eating now. I let that thought pass as just a memory about what used to happen.

Then, I made the decision to slow down.

Which also meant I was deciding to do things that would help me slow down.

I purposefully slowed my breathing, I allowed myself to feel the drive to grab another chip without reacting to it, which was not super comfortable but it was what I wanted to do.

I told myself “I can slow down,” I told myself, “go slow,” and I took my time with each chip, tasting it and chewing it.

And then, after I slowed myself down, I checked in with my body.

I had started eating the chips not just for pleasure but also because I was a little hungry.

And when I checked in after slowing myself down, I didn’t feel hungry anymore.

I wasn’t feeling full, which I didn’t actually want to feel but, I felt like I’d had enough, so it was that feeling right before feeling full where I don’t feel much going on in my stomach and definitely not hungry anymore.

And so I stopped. I stopped because I felt good in my stomach and I’d eaten enough chips to get some pleasure. I tasted them, they were yummy, and I was good.

I didn’t need more.

And the reason why I was able to stop when I wanted to, was because I had taken the time to slow myself down.

I didn’t just let my eating get faster, while freaking out, and worrying, and creating all these emotions that would stop me from thinking rationally and stop me from paying attention to my body.

I noticed what I was doing, feeling, and thinking, and I deliberately slowed myself down, because I can.

And you can too.

You are capable of slowing down so please don’t tell yourself that you can’t slow down, or can’t stop, or are out control.

Decide to slow down, talk to yourself in a useful way, a way that will calm you and encourage you to slow down, and if it feels uncomfortable to slow down when you’re feeling that drive to speed up, allow the discomfort to happen. It will pass and the urgent feeling will go away.

You can slow yourself down. The first step is believing you can and then, go work on doing it.

You got this.

Talk to you next time, bye bye.