

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #220: Visualizing Success

Hi! Today I'm talking with you about visualizing success and I want to talk about this because when people have been bingeing for a long time and have had the same experiences with their eating over and over, they tend to visualize failure instead.

They imagine that the past is going to keep repeating.

I was actually just coaching one of my group members on this today.

She was imagining that after eating a Joy Food, she would binge later.

She was also imagining that she was going to feel urges and feelings all day and it was going to be a ton of work.

When I asked her why she was imagining that all that would happen, she started saying, "Well in the past..." and I stopped her right there.

She was looking to her past experiences to determine what the rest of her day would be like.

And this was a problem because when she did, she felt anxious and when you feel anxious, you're probably not going to act in the most rational and logical ways.

For most of us, when we feel anxious we start to become unfocused and maybe a little scatter-brained, which for someone who struggles with binge eating and is trying to stop, that's not going to be useful.

You want to feel focused and have at least some confidence, so you can handle an urge if it comes up and make decisions that align with how you truly want to be eating.

So if she spent the rest of her day thinking about how she's gonna binge because she ate a Joy Food, she would indeed be setting herself up to do that and it would be likely that it would happen.

I also used to do that quite often and I hear other people do it often too.

They start telling themselves that they're going to binge.

It might be because, like my group member, they ate a certain joy food and in the past, have binged after doing that.

Or it might be because they binged yesterday and so many times they have binged two days in a row.

Or it might be because they're feeling an urge to binge and they think that once they feel one, it's all over and a binge is inevitable.

They get into this mindset that a binge is going to happen and either now they're going to worry or feel anxious about it happening, which again, are not going to be helpful feelings here, or they'll just succumb to any urge they feel and not even put in any effort to stop themselves since they are already feeling defeated because they believe it will happen anyway.

I know sometimes it might seem like you're just telling it like it is or are being realistic, or your prediction of what's to come for you seems justified because of what's happened before, many times.

But justified or not, you bingeing in the future, whether that's in seconds from now, minutes, hours, or days, is not something that will definitely happen just because something else happened that usually precedes your binges.

So when you're visualizing that a binge is going to happen, you're not thinking about facts, you're thinking about what you think will happen.

What you visualize for the future is all made up in your head. None of it has happened yet, none of it is fact yet, and you get to start creating the outcome you want in the future right now by choosing how you want to think about it now.

Your thoughts will cause you to feel feelings that will drive your actions and the result of your actions will reflect your thoughts.

So if you want to not binge, which is possible, you have to visualize and think about that outcome.

Visualize yourself not bingeing, making it through an urge, eating a joy food and then eating how you want to be eating for the rest of the day.

When you visualize the outcome you want, you're setting yourself up to get it, just like you'd set yourself up for a binge when you visualize yourself bingeing.

And here's how you'd set yourself up to not binge.

You're visualizing yourself not giving in to your urge, and you're seeing yourself do it in your mind.

And this is going to emotionally feel so much different, and better, than visualizing yourself bingeing, right?

When I walked through this with my group member today, she said she felt lighter and it felt good to imagine herself acting like the person she wants to be.

It feels so much better to visualize success than failure and when you feel better, you'll do better.

You'll be in a better place to take action to do what you truly want to be doing.

You'll be in a mindset that will align with how you want to be acting.

And that's crucial.

It's so much harder to think one way and try to act another way. That's what willpower is.

So if you want to create an outcome of not bingeing, start thinking about it, imagining it, and visualizing it now.

Now, there is one caveat to this.

It's not going to work if you don't believe it's possible for you to not binge.

You can tell yourself all day long that you're not going to binge but if you don't believe it, you're not going to create the feelings and actions that you'll need to in order to not binge.

You won't be able to override the anxiety, worry, fear, or defeat that you're actually feeling as you are really believing you will binge.

And I know for some of you, it's hard to believe you won't binge when you're in a situation that resulted in a binge so many times before.

But here's what you can do.

Go step by step through what you can do to make that ultimate outcome happen.

If you've been listening to this podcast for awhile, you know so many things you can do to help yourself not binge and if you haven't been listening, go through the episode titles and find some episodes that you think will help you.

When you can visualize yourself doing little things that will compound into this big thing, it's so much easier to believe it will be possible.

So instead of just imagining yourself at the end, visualize yourself going through the whole process.

Visualize yourself facing obstacles you imagine you'll face and visualize how you're going to overcome them.

Visualize what you're going to be thinking as you go through the process. Visualize how you'll feel.

That was what helped my group member go from feeling anxious to feeling lighter. We decided how she was going to handle her eating for the rest of the day and what she would do if she felt emotions or urges and what she's going to tell herself all day.

And she believed she could do all the little things and that's why she did feel lighter and the anxiety eased.

And what we also talked about was the times when she did in fact do all the things she's now visualizing herself doing. So she was starting to focus on the evidence that proves she is capable of doing those things that will help her to not binge.

And you can do that too. Instead of focusing on all those times when a circumstance resulted in a binge, focus on the times when it didn't.

And honestly, if you can't think of time when it didn't, this can be the time.

This time can be different.

I so so loved what my group member said at the end of our coaching.

She said, "Why can't this be the day that things are different? This can be the day I act differently."

Absolutely, 100% it can!

And it will start with you deciding it will be different, visualizing yourself making it be different, and walking yourself through doable steps that will make it happen.

So no more predicting and visualizing that a binge is going to happen, no matter what circumstance you're in.

A binge doesn't have to happen just because it did previously however many times.

Make this time be different.

Okay, that's what I have for you today, I'll talk to you next time.

Bye bye.