

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #223: Counting Allowed Urges

Hi! Today I'm talking with you about counting allowed urges.

People love having something to count to help them determine if they're making progress or not and the go-to for people who binge eat is usually counting binge-free days.

They'll not binge for a day, or for a week, or for a month or more and make that mean they're doing well and are making progress.

But, using binge-free days isn't the only way to show yourself that you're making progress and for some people, using only that as a determinant can backfire if they do end up bingeing.

I've seen so many people get so down on themselves for breaking their streak and then they start questioning themselves and think they're back at square one or maybe that they weren't doing as well as they thought or maybe their binge-free streak was a fluke, or that they'll never get past the amount of days they just reached.

That doesn't happen for everyone, some people just see it as a mistake to learn from, as an indicator that they still have something to work on more, or as a signal that they need to pay closer attention to themselves.

Bingeing after x amount of days is just a circumstance, it's something that happened and you get to decide how you think about it and what you make that mean about you, your progress, or your capabilities.

So, I only recommend you focus on counting binge-free days if you commit to not making it mean anything negative about you or your capabilities if your streak gets broken.

If you're someone who usually does make it mean something negative about yourself or your capabilities, or even if you don't, I want to offer you something else to count instead.

Allowed urges.

Now, before I get into what counting allowed urges is all about, let me first refresh you on what it means to allow an urge in case you don't remember of if you're new to the podcast.

Allowing an urge means that you're not trying to force the urge away but instead are letting it be there and letting it exist in your body. You're allowing it to move through you instead of trying to make it go away quickly. You're also not fighting with it or trying to ignore it but instead are putting your attention on it, are accepting it, and are welcoming it.

When you're allowing an urge, you're calm while feeling discomfort instead of panicking, getting frustrated, or worrying.

When you respond to your urge by allowing it, it will go away eventually, no feeling lasts forever, and it will also go away more quickly than if you're fighting with it, resisting it, or freaking out about it.

Eating isn't the only way to feel better when you're feeling an urge to binge. You can go through the urge, get to the other side of it, and feel better when you get there.

It may not happen as quickly as when you eat food but, it will result in a much better outcome.

So when I talk about allowing urges, that's what I'm talking about.

And a tool that I'm going to share with you in this episode is keeping track of the times when you do allow urges.

So I'm going to go through what it looks like to do this and why it can be helpful for you to do it.

First, decide how you want to keep track of your allowed urges.

You can have a piece of paper where you mark each allowed urge, that's what I am currently giving to my group members, it's simply just a piece of paper with boxes that they can check off.

You can keep track on your phone in your notes app or if you know of another app that would be useful for this. I personally don't know of one to mention here but if you know of one, go ahead and use it.

And you can also use a jar, glass, or bowl, something that's transparent where you add marbles, beads, anything really, and see them accumulate.

That's all that really matters here, is that you can see those allowed urges add up whether it's on paper, on a screen, or in a physical object.

You're creating a visual representation of the urges you allowed and as you do this, the effect it has on you is pretty awesome.

You're able to see, right in front of you, the amazing work that you've done.

It makes it so much harder to forget about what you've done and to downplay what you've done.

You can't deny what's right in front of you, all those urges that you allowed that you're seeing.

And as they add up, your confidence goes up, your trust goes up, and your belief in yourself goes up as you're showing yourself, with a visual, what you've done.

And what you've done, is something that is not easy, again and again, and how awesome is that?

You're not just watching yourself accumulate times you did something super easy. It's times you did something hard, and did something that's going to make it easier for you to not binge.

The more times you allow yourself to feel through urges, the easier it will be to do it and the easier it is for you to allow urges, the easier it will be to not binge.

And you're also showing yourself how many times you didn't binge. That's what each allowed urge is representing. You might sometimes think that you can't not binge but those check marks, beads, marbles, whatever you're using, prove that you can. Even if you only have one allowed urge, that one shows you that you are capable of not bingeing and now you're going to do it again. You're going to add to it.

So, the first step is to decide how you're going to make it so you visually see the urges you've allowed. On paper, on your phone, or in a physical object.

Then, you're going to notice when you're feeling an urge to binge.

You're going to allow yourself to feel the urge until it goes away, without eating of course.

Once it does, you count it as an allowed urge.

And then, you repeat for as many times as you want to.

You don't have to decide on an amount of allowed urges you're aiming for but it can be fun to have a goal, something to work toward.

You can also start with a small goal and increase it. Whatever feels good, and also doable for you.

So that's how you're going to do it and know that if you don't allow an urge and you do eat in response to it, you don't have to start over or subtract from your count. You're only adding here.

There is no punishing, only rewarding.

And I'll tell you, adding a check mark or a marble or whatever might not sound rewarding but it can be. Each one is like a little celebration for yourself. Appreciate it and remind yourself of what it represents.

For some reason, many of us don't appreciate the little rewards, like we think they're not good enough.

But remember back when we were little and felt rewarded when we got a sticker? A sticker, that we're going to have on our hand for, I don't know, a couple hours, and then it's lost forever, unless you were a sticker saver.

I remember back when I was an assistant dance teacher when I was in my early teens and we gave the kids stickers at the end of class. I don't remember one kid saying they didn't want one, they would all line up for them.

That was their reward at the end of class and they didn't think a sticker wasn't enough, they wanted it.

You can want your little reward for yourself that you know means something bigger than what it actually is.

And know that as you get more, it will be even more and more satisfying.

It's kind of like losing weight. That first pound might not be super exciting but seeing it on the scale is still a reward. Then when you've lost twenty, when all those weeks of losing a half a pound and one pound add up, now you're seeing twenty, your satisfaction grows.

So celebrate each one of those allowed urges, celebrate as you see yourself get more and more, and get excited about it.

Because as you're doing this, you're not just allowing urges or not bingeing, you're changing.

The best part about this whole thing really is who you become in the process of doing it.

I think it's almost impossible for you to be the same person when you've allowed zero urges vs when you've allowed 100.

When you're at 100, you think differently about yourself, about binge eating, about urges, about so many things.

So give this a try and see who you become.

Get yourself set up, commit to a doable goal, do your best to allow your urges, and anytime you do, give yourself that little reward by adding to your allowed urges tally.

Then repeat, repeat, repeat and know that you're changing with each urge you allow.

Get excited about each one, celebrate each one, and build your trust, confidence, belief, and skills as you do.

Alright, I hope you give this a try, give it a shot, and I'll talk to you later. Bye bye!

