

# **THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST**

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #226: Holding Two Beliefs at Once

Hi!

One of the most important things that you need to work on to stop binge eating is changing what you believe.

For you it might be what you believe about you, about binge eating, about your emotions, about your urges, about your body, or about food.

When I start working with people in my program, we uncover which ones it is for them and start to take a look at what specifically they are believing that's keeping them in binge eating.

Some common ones that pop up are that they're a failure, that binge eating is comforting, that emotions are scary, that urges are going to last forever, that their body is gross, and that there are foods that are bad.

If you're consistently thinking thoughts like these, it's going to be hard to stop binge eating.

It's hard to be successful when you believe you're a failure.

It's hard to stop binge eating when you think it's what will comfort you.

It's hard to feel emotions and urges if you think they're scary and never-ending.

It's hard to treat your body well when you think it's gross.

It's hard to fully allow yourself to eat what you want if you think what you want bad.

These are just a few examples of the thoughts that I hear from people, which are also some thoughts I had myself previously, and there's different versions of them, and so many other related beliefs that people have.

And sometimes, even though we can see how useless it is for us to think them, even though we see that thinking them makes us feel bad, which drives us to act in ways we don't want to, it's not always so easy to believe something different because we see them as being so true.

A lot of the time that's not the case. Through coaching, I'm constantly helping people change their views of themselves, their bodies, food, all the things I mentioned a minute ago because they start to see that what they've been believing isn't actually true.

For example, if they've been believing that their urges and emotions are going to last forever, I can help them see that they're not, because they're really not. Then over time, or maybe even immediately, they're able to let go of that belief and either stop thinking it or they're more easily able to dismiss that thought if it does come into their mind.

We have the power to do that with what we believe. We can change so much of what we believe.

But sometimes, it's not so easy, or maybe we don't even want to change it.

Sometimes we see something as true and trying to disprove this belief is just not going to happen, at least not right now. Maybe in the future it's possible, but sometimes we get so stuck on a belief as being true that we just can't see it as not true.

We aren't always going to stop believing the things that cause us to feel negatively or that drive us to do things we don't necessarily want to be doing.

But, that doesn't mean we have to only believe that thought.

For all of us who have binged, we have thought about bingeing in some kind of positive or beneficial way or else we would never have done it.

We might have thoughts like, "it's fun," "it's soothing," "it's relieving," "it numbs me," "it's comforting," and let's be honest with ourselves, going into that binge and eating all the food might actually be those things.

I ask people all the time if they'll get what they think they'll get from a binge and they'll usually say, "Yes, but, only temporarily."

They will numb out, they will stop feeling how they were feeling, they will make the urge go away, they will feel relieved, they will stop being bored, they will feel relaxed.

So saying that it's untrue that they will is going to be hard to believe.

But, just because it's true doesn't mean it's the only thing that's true and that is important to know.

What's also true is that the feeling, and the urge that they're wanting to make go away, are only temporary because all feelings are temporary. And if you eat a lot of food, or if you keep eating, you'll feel worse than you did when you started. What's also true is that there will be consequences that you definitely don't want to experience.

So yes there is good that comes from eating all that food but, there's also not good stuff too.

Same thing with urges. Yes urges are uncomfortable and yes you don't like feeling them but, it will be so worth it to feel them.

What I'm doing here is holding two beliefs at once and they're two beliefs that aren't in agreement with each other or aren't supporting each other.

So it ends up sounding something like this:

"Yes eating a lot of food would be really pleasurable but, I'd also feel like crap if I did it."

Or, "Urges are so uncomfortable but, they're only temporary, it will pass if I don't eat, and it will be worth it to feel it."

You're acknowledging two things that you believe as true and you're connecting them with a "but."

You're seeing both options and when you do, you're going to feel differently than when you're only seeing the first one.

You're not going to feel as strong of a desire for bingeing or as fearful of urges.

And just know that what I'm talking about here isn't something for you to tell yourself only when you're feeling an urge to binge to try and get yourself to not binge but, it's something for you to practice telling yourself often so it becomes as ingrained of a belief as your straight up useless thought has been.

You want this to be a belief that's prominent in your brain and easy to recall and you make that happen by repeating it over and over again because that's what beliefs are.

This can be used for anything.

You start with a belief you have that doesn't cause you to feel the best feeling or most useful thought and you add on a "but" or sometimes an "and" works better.

I have failed at stopping binge eating many times but, I'm going to figure it out.

I think my body is unattractive but, there are people who do think it is attractive.

This food is unhealthy but it's okay to eat foods I think are unhealthy just for pleasure sometimes.

I shouldn't have eaten all that food but I did and I'm going to figure out why it happened so I can do better next time.

I can't eat just one but, I'm working on learning how to.

Notice how different it feels when you add on the "but" and when you feel differently, you'll act differently.

And what's also important to know is that you're not trying to force yourself to believe something that you don't believe or to not believe something you do believe. That wouldn't be useful. It's only useful for you to tell yourself what you do believe.

So have two beliefs at once if you believe them both.

And maybe this will be a bridging thought for you until you're able to let go of that unuseful belief.

Or maybe you'll keep it this way forever and that's okay.

We all have many examples of this in our own lives where we hold on to two beliefs at once.

One example I have is when someone in my life did something that I thought was disrespectful and wrong. When it happened, I could only see it as being disrespectful and wrong.

But, after talking with an amazing coach friend of mine and after talking with the person themselves, I was able to see that it also wasn't wrong, that they weren't being intentionally disrespectful, they were actually trying to help themselves and protect me.

So it's both. That person didn't technically break any rules, they had every right to do what they did, they had some good intentions but, that doesn't mean I have to condone it or agree with it. I still think it was a crappy thing to do and that it wasn't helpful for either of us.

So when I think about it now what I believe is that I think it was a crappy thing to do but I understand why they did it.

Having that understanding of the person helps me to not feel as angry as I would if I was only thinking it was wrong and a crappy thing to do.

So if you're having a hard time letting go a belief that makes you feel negatively, that stirs up a lot of emotion for you and you're having a hard time letting it go now or you don't want to let it go ever, try adding on a "but" or an "and."

Have your belief and then add on:

"and that's okay."

Or, "and I accept that."

Or, "and this is what I'm going to do about it."

Or, "but also this...." and add on what else is true.

And I want to leave you with one I was talking about with a group member recently.

“It’s hard but, it will get easier with practice.”

Let’s not try to convince ourselves that some things aren’t hard but let’s also acknowledge when we practice things, they get easier.

And that includes all the things you’re doing to stop binge eating.

It will get easier to not overly restrict the foods you eat, to give yourself full allowance to eat what you want, to feel feelings and urges, to talk more nicely to yourself, to catch yourself when you’re eating things you don’t really want to be eating, to be more accepting of your body.

It’s hard now but, you can do hard things and it will get easier.

It’s hard now but, you’re going to practice doing what you need to do so it gets easier.

You got this.

Bye bye.