

# **THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST**

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #227: Worry Less to Binge Less

Hi! Before I get started today I want to remind you that registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program is opening up next week on December 15<sup>th</sup> of 2022!

If you're on the waitlist, you'll get notified via email as soon as it opens up and if you're not on the waitlist, go to [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group) to join it. That's also the page where you can get all the info about how the program works and if you have any questions that aren't answered there, send an email to [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com).

Let's make 2023 the year that you stop binge eating and let's do it together!

And now, let's talk about worrying.

It's something most of us do, probably all of us, and maybe you label it as worrying but you might also sometimes label it as being anxious.

And what's going on in your mind is that you're thinking something bad is going to happen or that something you don't want to happen will happen.

There's uncertainty, there's dwelling on something that concerns you, there's thinking about the worst case scenario.

And in this episode today, I'm going to talk about some common worries I see that relate to binge eating and how you can ease your worries, even ones that might not even be related to eating, so you don't end up bingeing in response to them.

Now, I have to first address that no matter how much worry you feel, a binge, or even emotional eating doesn't have to happen.

You are capable of feeling worried without eating anything to numb it or distract from it and if you eat to try and make yourself feel better, you'll probably end up giving yourself something else to worry about or, you might end up creating exactly what you were worried about.

So as with all feelings, the option to just feel it is always on the table and in my opinion, it's the best option.

But there is something you can do to make it easier for you to feel it.

There are things you can do to ease the worry you feel so it's not as intense and therefore easier to feel and one of those things is problem solving in your mind.

So much of worry is us just focusing on the problem.

There's lots of, "but what if this happens?" and we just sit there focusing on this undesirable or even terrible thing that could possibly happen.

Now, sometimes we can simply look to the other side of it and say, "but what if it doesn't?"

Because a lot of the time, there's a chance either could happen.

But sometimes, even when we believe that the bad thing probably won't happen, it might still stay stuck in our mind that it will.

So how do we ease that worry?

Well, when I work with my group members on worry, it depends on whether we're talking about something they're worried they'll do or something someone else will do.

There's similarities to how you can handle both but the difference here is that we have control over what we do but not other people.

And when I say control, I don't mean we are going to perfectly control all our impulses, thoughts, feelings, actions, behaviors, all of the time.

But there's so much we can do to be more intentional about how we respond to our impulses, our urges, our emotions, and about what perspective we choose to hold on to.

But other people, they make their own choices and although we may influence other people's thoughts, feelings, and actions, we can't control them and they always get to decide their own.

So I'll talk about worries about both yourself and about other people and I'll start with yourself.

Worries I see come up often are worries about bingeing of course, worries about weight gain, worries about failing, worries about urges and emotions.

Now, like I said before, if you're worrying about these things and you eat to try and stop feeling the worry, you just might make what you're worrying about happen.

You eat to distract from your worry about bingeing and it snowballs into a binge or you worry about urges and then feel an urge to make the worry go away.

But even if you're not eating to numb your worry, think about how you react to worry.

For most people, they get hyper-focused on what they're worrying about and thoughts about it just swirl around in their mind taking up way too much of their mental space. They have a hard time thinking about anything else.

And it's possible to stop this or at least to decrease the worry so it's not as consuming and here's how you do it.

First, you write down what you're worried will happen so you're clear on what it is you're worrying about and you're getting it out of your head and onto paper. You can also type if you want to. But get it written in front of your eyes.

It can be such a different experience when you see your thoughts written in front of you than when they're just swirling around in your mind.

So let's use worrying about bingeing as an example because it's such a common one for people who binge.

I see it come up with people who are doing well and worry that they'll binge or people that know they'll be around food or will be in situations that usually lead them to binge or they binged yesterday and worry it will happen again today.

So let's say your worry is that you'll binge. You write that down.

Now, let's get even more specific about this worry.

Why would it happen?

And the simple answer is, because you gave in to an urge to binge.

Bingeing doesn't just happen. It's a result of you giving in to an urge to binge.

So the real worry here is that you'll eat in response to an urge. That's why the binge would happen.

It's like if you're worried that you'll lose your job. Why would you lose your job? Let's get specific about what you think you'd do that would create that outcome.

So now, you've written down that you're worried you'll give in to an urge to binge.

Next, we're going to find anything that you might do in order for that to happen, so we're working backwards here.

Why do you think you would eat in response to it? Why do you think you would feel an urge to begin with?

And I want to make sure that you're being truthful here because I know some of you would want to write something like, "because I'm out of control," or "I can't control myself," or "because I can't stop" and those just simply aren't true.

Because the truth is that you aren't out of control, you can control yourself, and you can stop.

Now, we all of course have habits and sometimes things seem so automatic and it's like reflexes and we have reactions and we're not consciously deciding to do those things.

But, when we bring awareness to them, we can stop.

Like if you habitually ate a piece of food while you're preparing dinner like you always do, you might not have consciously chosen to eat that piece but, if you bring awareness to the fact that you ate it instead of zoning out or simply not paying attention to yourself and what you're doing, you can make the decision to not eat another bite and follow through on that decision.

But the problem for a lot of people is that they stay unaware, they're not paying attention to themselves, and therefore don't even know what they're doing and can't make a decision to stop doing what they don't even notice they're doing.

And what's even worse is when you do notice but then tell yourself you can't stop or you're out of control and then you won't even attempt to stop. You're not going to try and stop something you think you can't.

So know that that's not true and you *can* be in charge of what you're doing.

And along with that, you can be in charge of what you're thinking which is the most important because your thoughts will determine how you feel and your feelings will drive your behaviors.

So, you're going to write down what you're worried will happen and then write why it would happen and you're going to do it as factually as possible without blaming yourself, without being harsh with yourself.

It would look something like, "I would feel an urge because usually when I get home from work I want relief from the stress I've been feeling all day."

And then, "I would eat to relieve the stress and keep eating because it tastes so good and I'll feel better and I won't want it to stop."

Notice the difference between those vs, "I'd feel an urge because I always do and I'd keep eating because I can't stop myself."

And this is why getting to those first thoughts is important.

The next step is to problem solve ahead of time.

When we're worrying, what we're usually doing is just focusing on the problem, going in circles, and getting nowhere.

But what's going to ease your worries, is finding a solution before it even happens.

It's figuring out what you can do to make it not happen.

It's preparing yourself so you're ready for what you anticipate will come.

So how do you solve being out of control? Or how do you solve something that just happens?

Sounds really challenging to me.

But to solve eating to relieve stress, that's for sure doable.

And so is eating to keep feeling good and to keep getting pleasure.

I know because I've done them and I work on them with my group members all the time.

Put simply, you can handle your stress differently, there are other options besides eating, and you can allow yourself to let the pleasure of eating end, you can allow yourself to feel however you'd feel when you stop eating and you can find pleasure in other things.

So you're going to write down how you're going to handle that stress, how you're going to get relief without eating, how you're going to stop yourself from bingeing, or even overeating when you feel so good eating and the food is so pleasurable.

So instead of focusing on the problem that you imagine you'll have in the future, you're going to focus on solving it ahead of time.

You're going to write down what you're going to do and what you're going to intentionally think in order to make sure that what you're worrying about won't happen.

And once you have a plan that's doable and that you believe will work, then you won't have so much worry.

You don't have to worry about feeling stress if you know how to handle it without eating.

Same for urges.

And you don't have to worry about not stopping eating if you know how to stop.

So when it comes to worries about things that only you are involved in, solve them ahead of time.

Figure out why it would happen and then come up with a plan and strategies for how you will handle whatever could happen.

So now let's talk about when other people are involved in our worries.

We can't come up with a plan and strategize for how we can stop them from doing what we worry they'll do.

And it can be harder to just settle with a thought like, "but maybe they won't do it," because we can't control what they do, unlike with ourselves where we have so much control.

So this is what I suggest you do if you're worrying about what someone else will do.

And a quick side note here, what I'm going to talk about here is something else you can do to help you with your worries about yourself.

So say you're worrying you'll binge, you can do what I'm going to explain here but instead of doing it with another person, you do it with yourself.

First, you go to the place, in your mind, where they've done what you worry they'll do and if it's yourself, you go to the place where you did what you worried you'd do.

Now, this probably won't feel good and you might not want to go there.

This happened to me recently when I was getting coached on a worry about another person and as soon as my coach told me to go there, I pushed back.

I thought, "I don't want to!"

It felt awful to even think about it.

But I let myself feel awful and I thought about it.

I trusted my coach and believed that allowing myself to go to this uncomfortable place that I didn't want to be in would be worth it.

Just like I teach you to do with your urges and emotions.

Feeling them will be worth it in the end.

So let's use a specific example here.

Let's say you're worried that someone is going to pressure you to eat something you don't want to eat.

Now, imagine it's happening.

Why is it a problem for you?

Someone is pressuring you to eat, why is that a problem?

When we go there like this, we're uncovering what the real worry is here.

You're afraid you're going to feel a feeling, like guilty, or pressured, or angry, or something like that.

Or you're afraid they'll feel a certain way if you say no.

And why are you afraid to feel how you're going to feel or afraid for them to feel how they're going to feel?

Now we're getting down to the work you need to do to stop feeling worried.

If you overcome your fear of feeling feelings and are willing to feel them, you won't be worried about this person pressuring you to eat.

If you overcome your fear of them feeling feelings and are willing to allow them to feel feelings, you won't be worried about this person pressuring you to eat.

I don't worry about being pressured to eat for this reason. I'm willing to feel discomfort if they do pressure me and I believe it's okay for them to feel feelings if I say no. So I have nothing to worry about.

In my mind, it's all already handled and I'm prepared for it all.

So you go there, you imagine that what you're worried about has happened, you figure out why it's a problem for you, and you solve that problem ahead of time in your mind. You believe you'll be okay if the person does what you worry they'll do because you've already walked through the scenario in your mind and decided how you'll handle it.

The more prepared you are for what a person might say or do, the less you'll have to worry about it happening and that goes for people who bring food into your home, who push food on you, who eat your binge foods in front of you, who make comments about what you eat and don't eat.

Know why it would be a problem for you if they did that and then decide how you'd solve that problem, how'd you'd handle it and again, most of the time when it comes to food stuff, it comes down to how you think you or they would feel and the solution is to allow yourself and themselves to feel the feelings.

Now let's do a non food example too because like I talked about earlier in this episode, sometimes we eat to distract from our worries and to make them temporarily stop swirling around in our minds and they might have nothing to do with food.

So let's say you're worried that your partner is going to leave you.

You go there. You imagine that they have.

Why is this a problem for you?

It might be because you don't want to feel hurt.

Or you don't want to lose what you have.

I'd say those are two of the most common reasons it would be a problem for people but obviously it could be something else so you find yours.

And by the way, this example could also be used for losing a job or a friend or a home or anything.

So you don't want to feel heartbroken and hurt and you don't want to lose what you have.

But what if you did? What would you do?

And here's what you do.

You feel through the feelings and you create a life that's bigger and better than the one you had.

And side note, I gotta give credit to my girl BreakUp Coach Dorothy for the second thing I said because that's what she always talks about – creating a life that's bigger and better than the one you had with your ex and if you are dealing with a breakup, make sure you check out her podcast – How to Get Over Your Ex. It's amazing.

Anyway, enough praising my girl Dorothy.

You go to that place where your worry happened, you look at why it would be a problem for you, and you decide how you'd handle the problem if it did happen.

And again, if you're willing to and are okay with feeling feelings, you don't have to worry.

And if you believe you can have everything you have now and more without this person, which you can, then you don't have to worry.

And then instead of worrying and reacting to your worry in your relationship, which might manifest as you being graspy, over compensating, not present, or some other behavior that's not probably not going to make you attractive to your partner and could then result in the worry you're worried about, you can be calm and show up as yourself and enjoy yourself and be the partner you want to be.

If you're not worrying so much about what other people might do or worrying about what you might do, you are going to show up in your life in a much better way.

It feels so much better to be prepared, to have strategies and plans, and to create certainty for yourself by anticipating what you will do and how you'll handle it and believing you'll be okay.

Because you will be.

In the end, you'll be okay.

You'll be okay if you feel an urge, if you binge, if someone brings food to your home, if you're around a bunch of free food, if someone pressures you, if someone argues with or confronts you, or if a job or relationship ends.

It's totally normal to worry about these kinds of things, but once you notice you're worrying, you can ease your worries and decrease the intensity of your worries and slow down, even stop the swirling thoughts, if you go through what I talked about in this episode today.



You will be okay.

Show yourself why you will be okay and how you will make yourself okay.

Alright, that's what I have for you today and remember, registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program is opening next week on December 15<sup>th</sup> of 2022. Go to [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group) to get all that info and I'll see you soon.

Bye bye.