

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #233: Shopping for New Clothes

Hi! Today I want to talk with you about shopping for new clothes and this is actually going to cover two scenarios around this topic – shopping for new clothes in general, which for a lot of us can be a rough experience when clothes aren't fitting us how we want them to, and shopping for new clothes because the clothes you have are too small because you've gained weight.

So let's first talk about when the clothes you own don't fit.

Weight gain can happen when you binge eat and it can also happen when you're working on stopping because you're being less restrictive with what you're allowing yourself to eat and you might still be bingeing sometimes too since for most people, the binges don't just stop right away and there's a period of time when you're still bingeing and learning from those binges.

I know for me, pretty much the whole time I was bingeing I wanted to lose weight so the thought of gaining weight worried me and I did actually gain many times. My weight went up and down throughout those years, I would do whatever I could to lose it...and what I was doing was most likely causing me to feel more urges to binge which would result in gaining the weight back.

It was things like not going out with friends because I didn't want to eat out because I associated eating out with not eating as healthy as I wanted to which I thought would result in gaining weight. So the isolation I was choosing would eventually lead to me feeling disconnected and bored which were typically triggers for urges for me. And I'd also be overly restrictive with what I was eating. I'd make foods I liked off-limits and I'd try to eat less, probably not enough really, given that a lot of the time I was working out a lot and even when I wasn't, I was probably under eating some of the time.

So weight gain did happen and when it did, I did not want to buy new clothes for two reasons.

One was that I was determined to lose the weight and I didn't want to spend money on clothes that I believed I wouldn't be wearing for very long.

The second was that to me, it was like admitting defeat. Buying those clothes meant that I was resigning to this weight and I definitely did not want to do that.

So then when I wouldn't buy bigger clothes to fit my bigger body, I was left with two problems.

One, I didn't have much variety in the clothes I was able to wear in my closet and two, I was wearing clothes that didn't fit me.

I can remember wearing pants that were too tight in the thighs and waist because I didn't want to buy new ones, especially pants for work. I was a server at the time and I would be walking around all day, wearing pants that were uncomfortable.

And let me tell you, that is not enjoyable and on the days where I wasn't happy at my job, those tight pants just made me feel worse.

So often people think that wearing their too small clothes will help motivate them and maybe it will sometimes but, most of the time, it's just going to make you feel upset about your clothes not fitting, then you start thinking about why they don't fit and get mad about your binges, and you're going to feel physically uncomfortable.

It can also be like a punishment, like you deserve to feel uncomfortable but, you don't deserve to be punished for gaining weight or for binge eating.

You didn't do it on purpose.

Now, if you've listened to a lot of my podcast episodes, you've probably heard me talk about how when we feel urges to binge, we make the decision to give in to them.

We are not out of control, no one is forcing us.

But, that doesn't mean that sometimes we're going to make the decision to eat or to binge anyway and this is not something to punish yourself over or to blame yourself for.

It's something you learn from, you get help with, and you problem solve so you can get better at making the decisions you truly want to be making.

With so many things in life, we are not going to be perfect at doing what we say we're going to do. We're not always going to make the decisions our true self and future self want us to make.

And for most people who binge, they actually don't know how to make the eating decisions they want to make. There are obstacles in their way that they might not be aware of or don't know how to overcome and that's okay. You're learning. That's why you're here.

And if you do feel urges and if you do give in to your urges, punishing yourself by forcing yourself to wear clothes that are uncomfortable is going to be way less effective at initiating change than learning and problem solving will.

And it will be so much easier to learn and problem solve if you're feeling as best as you can in your current circumstances, including your current body.

Don't add more discomfort to your life.

Wear clothes that fit the body you have right now.

You want comfort. We all want comfort. Give that to yourself.

I can't tell you how many times group members of mine have gone out and bought new clothes and it was very helpful for them in this process.

Not only did it take away that attempt as punishing to initiate change but, it also took away some of the desperation to lose weight quickly to fit into their clothes.

They didn't have to be in such a hurry and do things like a few minutes ago I told you I did when I'd gain weight, the things that would most likely perpetuate urges and binges.

So if you don't have a lot of clothes that fit, do yourself a favor and choose comfort.

Go somewhere that has lower priced clothes and get some "for now" clothes. Go to Marshall's, Ross, TJ Maxx, what ever you have. Go to consignment stores or thrift stores.

And those clothes you have that don't fit right now, don't keep them front and center in your closet or bureau. Put them aside so you don't have to look at them every time you get dressed and think about how they're too tight or too small or start beating yourself up for bingeing or start hating on your body.

Okay, so now that you're going to choose comfort instead of choosing punishment or trying to motivate yourself by choosing discomfort, you're going to go buy some clothes.

And whether you're in a body that is bigger than you want it to be or you're in a body that is the size you want it to be, like I said before, clothes shopping can be a rough experience.

I still experience frustration when I shop and my body is in a weight range that I'm happy with.

So many clothes I try on don't fit my body well, especially with the styles of clothes that are sold today. And I sometimes have a hard time finding clothes in the colors I like and that I think I look best in. Clearly these designers don't have my body type or my particular style preferences in mind when they're creating their clothes.

And when I try on clothes, and when you try on clothes, and they don't fit us well, we have two options.

We can blame our bodies for not fitting into the clothes or we can understand that not all clothes are supposed to fit our bodies.

If an article of clothing, or if every article of clothing you try on doesn't fit you well or doesn't fit at all, it's not your body's fault.

Clothes are not one size and style fits all. Most clothes are not going to fit you like a glove.

Not all size larges are the same size, not all size 14s are the same size, not all shirts are cut the same, neither are all pants.

Sizes are inconsistent and not all styles are flattering for all bodies.

I look at women wearing so many of the current styles and they look so good on them but then I try them on and I don't think they look good on me.

And that's okay.

There are clothes that do look good on my body. After all these years living in this body I have and trying different clothes, I've learned what looks best.

Unfortunately what looks best for me isn't easy to find and I'm not going to blame my body for that.

I'm also not going to blame designers. It's not their fault. They're just designing what they want to design and it may or may not work for me.

Blaming, especially my body, isn't going to do any good.

But what will is believing that my body isn't wrong.

When we can be patient during the process of trying on clothes, knowing that there will be something for us, and knowing that our body isn't the problem, it won't be such a dreadful experience and you won't feel as bad.

Now, of course there might be some frustration when you've tried on a lot of stuff or have gone to a few different stores and leave with nothing. I experience that myself.

But we gotta manage our thoughts about what's going on if we want to keep going.

Maybe you're able to get your thoughts inline and be optimistic so you can continue now. Maybe you take a break. Maybe you stop for the day and continue another day.

Frustration is normal, but you can't let it drive you to give up entirely and then go eat to numb your frustration.

The only reason why you're feeling frustrated is because of how you're thinking about not finding clothes that fit you well and you get to decide what you think about it.

You'll find something. There are clothes for your body.

And don't forget that tailoring your clothes is an option too.

You can make the clothes work for your body instead of trying to force your body to work for the clothes.

Okay, so if you have gained weight, choose comfort when it comes to your clothes. No punishing yourself with more discomfort. More comfort will make it easier for you to do what you need to do to eat how you want to eat and stop bingeing because you won't be giving yourself more problems to think about and more discomfort to deal with.

And, when you do buy clothes, no blaming your body. Your body isn't wrong. There are going to be so many articles of clothing that aren't going to fit your body well and that's normal. Be accepting of your body and be patient.

Alright, I'll talk to you again soon.

Bye bye.