THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #238: Fearing the Scale

Hello! Today I am going to talk with you about the scale and if you have any fears or worries about stepping on the scale then this episode is for you.

I know that lots of people have zero desire to ever step on a scale and they couldn't care less how much they weigh. But there's also a lot of other people who don't step on the scale not because they don't care about the number but because they're afraid of it and afraid of what might happen if they see a number they don't like, that they don't expect, or that is higher than they want it to be.

And sometimes it may even be a good number that they worry about seeing because in their past they've lost weight and then used it as an excuse to overeat or binge and then feel like crap afterward.

Now, back in episode #213 I talked about weighing yourself while working on stopping binge eating and whether you should be weighing yourself and if you choose to, why you're choosing to.

It's of course your decision to make whether you're going to weigh yourself or not but, I personally don't recommend weighing yourself while you're working on stopping binge eating. But I do know there are people who are going to do it and also people who once they stop binge eating, are going to want to lose weight and will want to have the scale be a part of their process at that time.

So for anyone who does want the scale to be in their life, who does weigh themselves or who wants to weigh themselves, I want to help you overcome your fears of it and your worries about what will happen if you step on it.

And I also want to help you to not have the same negative experiences you've had in the past after stepping on the scale.

So, usually people worry about two things that could happen after stepping on the scale.

One is that they will feel an uncomfortable emotion.

The other is that they will eat poorly.

They don’t want to feel disappointed, angry, frustrated, ashamed, or guilty.

And they don’t want seeing the number on the scale to send them off on an eating spree.

These reactions are both so common. I’ve experienced them both plenty of times and when my group members talk to me about the scale they share the same concerns.

I’ve had the scale go up, or not change, and when I saw it, I’d think that what I was doing wasn’t working anyway so I’d just have a little quit and eat whatever.

That would typically happen if I was emotionally exhausted from dieting and I’d use it as an excuse to allow myself to eat all the foods I’d be restricting from myself.

Or maybe I wouldn’t go off the rails with my eating but I’d just over-focus on my body that day and feel down about it thinking I’m out of control, fat, or unattractive.

Or maybe it wasn’t overeating that was the reaction to the number but under eating in order to try and speed up progress, and we all know where that can lead…

...and in case you forgot, it can lead to feeling urges to binge .

And the undesirable reactions from the scale weren’t only due to the number going up or not changing. It could also have happened if the number when down.

I’d think I was doing well so I deserved to or had room for a little something extra, which might have turned into a lot of something extra.

So it was like no matter what the number was, it could result in me feeling how I didn’t want to feel or in me doing things I didn’t want to be doing.

So I understand why you might be afraid to see the number on the scale.

But here’s what I learned about the scale and what you need to know too.

The number it displays is not what makes you feel how you feel and it’s not what makes you do what you do after seeing it.

You are what makes it happen.

When you look at that number, you don’t feel anything until you have a thought about the number.

And what you do will be driven by that feeling you feel and how you decide to respond to that feeling.

That number you see is just data. It is just telling you the weight of your body.

What it's not telling you is how hard you're working, if what you're doing is making a difference, if you're making progress mentally, which is really the most important progress you can make by the way, if you're good enough, if your body is good enough, if you're worthy, if you're deserving, or if you're a failure.

If any of those thoughts are in your mind when you see the number on your scale, know that the scale did not put them there.

You did.

And this is good news because that means the scale has no power over what happens in your mind, in your body, or in your actions.

No matter what number shows up on that scale, you have the power to respond to it how you want to.

And you can tell this is true because you've probably had all kinds of different reactions to the numbers.

Maybe there were times when it went up and you we're okay with it or it just didn't affect you that much.

Maybe there were times when it went down and you weren't affected much.

If it were the number on the scale making you feel and behave how you do, then you would have the same experience every time you saw certain numbers or certain differences in numbers.

But you don't.

And what this means is that you have authority over how you respond to that number, how you think about it, which will determine how you feel and behave once you've seen it.

So when a number shows up on the scale, you're in charge of what happens next.

So what I recommend you do is decide what that will be before you even step on the scale.

Decide ahead of time what you are going to tell yourself if that number goes up, if it stays the same, or if it goes down.

Decide how you want to feel, decide what you want to do.

Prepare yourself for whatever you may see and decide what path you're going go do down before you're even faced with the number.

Now, it would also be helpful to prepare yourself for whatever initial thoughts and feelings might come up.

If you see a number you weren't expecting or a number you don't like, it would make sense for a negative emotions to arise inside of you.

It would make sense for all those same thoughts you usually think to come into your mind.

But when you hear those thoughts or when you feel those feelings, you're not just going to stay with them for the rest of the day and react to them in ways you don't want to.

You're going to allow yourself to feel the feelings that come up, you're going to acknowledge the thoughts that come up, and you're going to redirect yourself to the thoughts that ahead of time you had decided you were going to think.

And you're going to repeat that process if those usual thoughts and feelings come back.

And if you're having a hard time changing how you're thinking or feeling, that's okay too. You can be in those thoughts and feelings and still not give up on yourself or not go and eat to feel better or not come up with excuses to eat.

You still get to decide how you respond to having those thoughts and feelings.

It's normal to feel disappointment, it's normal to question yourself or your body, but don't mentally beat yourself up if that happens.

Just acknowledge it and then get to work on shifting your thinking so you can shift how you're feeling and not feel driven to do those things you don't want to be doing.

So if you fear the scale, it's because you think it controls or will determine how you think, feel, and behave but it won't.

It won't make you feel happy or sad.

It won't make you give up or motivate you.

It won't make you feel bad about yourself or your body or make you feel good either.

You make those things happen and no matter what the scale says, you can think, feel, and behave how you want to.

Sometimes it's just going to take a bit of work on your thoughts to get there.

The scale will give you data, you choose how you respond to that data, and if you know that the number on the scale doesn't have the power to do anything except give you data about your weight, you have nothing to fear.

Alright, now, go work on stopping binge eating, put your focus on progressing with that, know that your weight doesn't determine if you're progressing with stopping binge eating or if you're progressing with changing you and changing in your mind, and I'll talk to you again soon.

Bye bye.