

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #243: Other People's Thoughts About How You Eat

Hi! Before I get started I wanted to give you a quick reminder that the Stop Feeling Urges to Binge Eat Workshop is tomorrow, March 29th of 2023 at 3pm ET and if you don't hear this by then or aren't able to make it live, the recording will be available for a limited time so go to coachkir.com/workshop to register for the live workshop or to get access to the recording if it's still available.

This is not just going to be me teaching you how to stop feeling urges to binge, you're going to be working on your personal urges, your personal reasons for why you feel them and how you're going to stop.

We all have general reasons for why urges happen but in the workshop, you're going to get reasons and strategies that are specific for you.

We're really gonna dig in here!

So again, go to coachkir.com/workshop to register for the live workshop or to access the recording if it's still available when you hear this.

Alright, now onto today's topic, other people's thoughts about how you eat.

When we struggle with our eating, it can be uncomfortable to eat around other people.

We have our own thoughts and feelings about what we eat, what we don't eat, and how much we eat but then when you add in other people's thoughts and feelings, it can be even more uncomfortable for us.

And if it is uncomfortable for you, most likely, you're thinking the other people are judging you.

I've talked with a few of my group members recently about what they think other people are thinking when they're eating around them, and here are a few examples of what they've said people will think about them:

"She looks like a pig."

"She's eating too much."

"She doesn't have it together."

"She shouldn't be eating that."

They think that their food choices will cause other people to think negatively about them as a person, and maybe even not like them.

One of my group members told me she would get worried that people would think she's not good enough or is incompetent if she ate certain foods that she considered to be unhealthy.

And she believed that if she didn't eat only the healthiest options, then those people might not like her.

Now, us people, we want to be liked and we want people to think positively of us.

It's a natural desire because we are a social species and evolutionarily speaking, belonging in a group of people is what has kept us alive.

It is incredibly difficult to survive on our own. Imagine having to do everything on your own to provide, from start to finish, your own shelter, food, and clean water. It's not impossible but that would take a lot of work. So having other people in our community helps us to divvy up jobs and duties and tasks so we don't expend all our energy just trying to survive and because of course more minds and bodies are better than one.

So yeah, we care what other people think about us. We want to belong.

And because we care, we're going to think about what other people think and wonder what they think and sometimes try to influence what other people think.

And it's not always a bad thing that we try to influence them.

For example, I may choose certain words when talking to someone so my delivery is softer rather than harsher to influence them to not think I'm a bitch.

I don't see this as a problem.

But here's how trying to influence other people's thoughts can become a problem when you're eating around other people and are trying to control their thoughts with your food choices.

You might eat less to make them think a certain way and then you're left feeling physically unsatisfied. And how many times have you binged after not being full after a meal? It's not inevitable. There are plenty of times when people who binge eat just go eat a little more and they're good but I can't tell you how many times I've heard from people that not being full after a meal is what started their binge.

And something else that could happen is that you might not eat the foods you want to eat and you're left feeling emotionally and mentally unsatisfied. And the same thing could happen as when you're physically unsatisfied. You might just go eat something small that you enjoy or you fall into a binge as you're trying to find that satisfaction.

It is so important that you are physically, emotionally, and mentally satisfied when you eat most of the time.

It's of course not going to happen 100% of the time. We're never going to be perfectly satisfied all of the time.

And if you are not satisfied, you are going to make sure you're doing everything you can to not let that lack of satisfaction trigger you to binge.

But you're also going to do what you can to feel satisfied in the first place so you're not searching for it when you're alone after you're not with those people anymore.

And you're going to do that by eating until you're full and by eating the food that you want to eat.

But if you're worried about what other people are thinking, and if you think those people are judging you or are thinking negatively of you, it might be hard for you to do that.

So let's take a look at why you think people are going to think certain thoughts about you.

I already addressed why you think about their thoughts to begin with, because we all want to belong and be liked.

Now let's talk about the specific thoughts you think they think.

Most likely, they are a projection of your thoughts.

If you think they'll think you're a pig, it's because you think you're a pig.

If you think they'll think you don't have it together, it's because you think you don't have it together.

If you think they'll think you're eating too much, it's because you think you are.

If you think they'll think you shouldn't be eating that, it's because you think that you shouldn't.

This isn't always the case and I'll talk about when it's not in a moment but most of the time, it is.

What you think they think, you think.

So when you take a look at the thoughts you think other people will think about you, which of them do you think about yourself?

Whatever they are, you need to work on shifting that belief about yourself.

Because here's the thing. If you're no longer thinking that way about yourself, it's unlikely you're going to be thinking other people are thinking it.

If you don't think you're a pig, you're probably not going to think other people think you're a pig.

This is why your assumptions about what people think about you are different from what I assume people think about me and what other people might assume other people think about them.

We all think differently about ourselves and therefore project different thoughts onto other people.

Not all are different, we'll have some that are the same but they're not all the same because we all think differently.

So when you clean up your thoughts about yourself and what you make it mean about you if you eat all that food and if you eat what you consider to be unhealthy, then your mind will be more at ease when you're eating around other people.

You won't be judging yourself therefore probably won't assume that other people are judging you too.

If you think it's okay to be eating what you're eating then you probably won't worry so much that other people are thinking it's not okay.

You're more likely to assume they agree just like when you're being judgmental of yourself you're also likely to assume the other people will agree and will also be judging you.

But what if it's not a projection?

What if you think you're doing the right thing but worry that other people won't agree?

Here's what I'll tell you.

There are going to be some people who have judgements about what you're eating and think you should be eating differently and a lot of people who won't.

And most likely, if they do have judgements, their judgements don't really have anything to do with you but more to do with them, with what they've been taught, what they choose to believe, maybe with their diet mentality, maybe with their own insecurities.

You can try to change their mind but you also don't have to.

You can decide that you're making the right choices for you and feel good knowing that for yourself.

You don't need their validation to feel okay about how you're eating.

You can validate yourself.

And if they do have thoughts about what you eat, don't eat, and how much you eat, and if you try to explain your decision and they don't change their opinion, you can allow them to have their thoughts and if you think they're wrong, you can let them be wrong.

Because the other options are to try and convince them otherwise, which might be a waste of energy and time if they're not open to changing their mind, or you can eat less than you want to and not eat the foods you want to eat in order to control what they think, and then you're left feeling unsatisfied.

You can save yourself from feeling drained and unsatisfied by just letting them have a different opinion than you.

I know it's not always easy to do this, especially when it's a person whose opinion you really care about but again, look at your options.

You can be okay with your decisions and allow them not to be, or you can do things you don't want to do so you can try to make them think a certain way about you.

And here's something else that I think is worth thinking about.

We have these ideas about what people will think if we eat a certain way and sometimes we might be entirely wrong.

You might think people will think better of you if you eat healthier foods but what if you're wrong?

Sometimes people judge other people for choosing the healthier option.

They might even say out loud, "Oh, you're so healthy," as if it's a bad thing.

I know I've had people say things like that to me before.

Or maybe you don't eat your whole meal because you're genuinely full and someone might say, "That's all you're eating?" Again, like it's a bad thing.

And let's not forget about the people who are going to judge you whether you eat a lot or a little or this food or that.

No matter what you eat or how much you eat, someone might have a judgement so if that's the case, just do what you want and let the people judge. Let them feel negative as they judge and you can feel good doing what you want to do.

And also know that a lot of the time, people have no judgements or they might have a fleeting thought about what or how much you're eating and they're for sure not spending time being fixated on it.

So while we can't control what other people are thinking, we can allow them to have their thoughts.

And the more secure you are with your decisions around eating, the easier it will be for you to not spend your time worrying about their thoughts and also defending your decisions.

A few weeks ago I ordered a large steak and cheese sub because I was really hungry and I ate the whole thing.

Afterward, the person I was with asked me, "Did you eat the whole thing?"

Now, had I had negative thoughts about me eating it all, thinking I shouldn't have, or I'm a pig for having eaten all that, or it was too much, or I'm a gross fatty, then I probably would have felt bad when they said that or maybe have gotten defensive.

But because I believed that eating it all was the right decision for me, especially because I didn't feel uncomfortably full afterward, I just said, "I did. I was really hungry."

And that was the end of that. They and I said nothing else about it and we moved on to other things.

What you eat and don't eat and how much you eat doesn't have to mean anything negative about you as a person.

It actually doesn't until you decide it does.

You decide what it means about you and all it has to mean is that it was what you and your body wanted.

You wanted that food and that can be it.

If you ate less than you did you wouldn't have been physically satisfied, and that can be it.

When people aren't worried about what other people think, that's pretty much where their mind is at.

So spend less time thinking about what other people are thinking and more time thinking about how you want to be thinking and make more decisions that align with your true self, who you truly are, and decisions that align with what you and what your body want.

Alright, you do you and let other people do them.

And just a quick reminder before I go about the workshop, Stop Feeling Urges to Binge Eat. Go to coachkir.com/workshop to attend live tomorrow, March 29th at 3pm ET or to access the recording if it's still available.

Okay, talk to again soon, bye bye.