

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #248: One Year Later with Carrie

Hi! For the very first time, I've invited one of the podcast's success story guests to return for another episode!

Back in episode 186, I chatted with Carrie, one of my former group members, and in that episode, she talked about what her life was like during the 35 years that she had been binge eating, what kinds of things she did and was doing to help her to stop binge eating, and what her life looked like after having not binged for over 4 months, after having had periods of doing it every single day.

Now, a little over one year later, I'm bringing her back to find out what's been going on in the last year, how her life has changed, how she's changed, and what her eating looks like these days.

And you might be surprised by what she shares.

So, without further ado, here's Carrie, one year later!

Carrie:

Hi, am so glad to see you.

Kirstin:

I'm so glad to see you. You look amazing.

Carrie:

Thank you, and likewise.

Kirstin:

Oh my gosh, I am so excited to talk with you. Can we just jump right in?

Carrie:

Definitely.

Kirstin:

Perfect. What has happened in the last year since the last time you were on the podcast? Tell me everything.

Carrie:

It has been a crazy year and such a good year. When I was actively binge-eating, my world was so small, just locked in a cycle of shame and self-doubt, and just eat and repeat, and just felt physically and mentally defeated. Just felt like I couldn't get off of this nightmarish merry-go-round. And since being on your program and since the last time we talked a year ago, I have built a life that I love and that I'm really proud of. I am still doing karate.

Kirstin:

Yes. What belt are you on now?

Carrie:

I'm a green belt now, which is about halfway to black.

Kirstin:

That's amazing. How has that been for you?

Carrie:

I love it. I love the practice. I'm still at the same little dojo with amazing people that I really love. I was the first adult female to join that dojo. And we now have three other females, which is fantastic. I've participated in tournaments and have discovered that I love to spar, which initially was really terrifying, and I've learned to love it. It's been really good for me.

Kirstin:

I love this. And I'm assuming these are things that you never would have done two years ago?

Carrie:

No, absolutely not. Never.

Kirstin:

Why do you think that change happened? Why do you think that you're willing to do this now and you weren't before?

Carrie:

Well, that is more complicated question than you would think. Like I said, initially, binge-eating keeps your world so very small, and I just couldn't get out of that cycle. I was unwilling to get out of my comfort zone. I was embarrassed about my body. I was afraid of what other people were going to think of me. I physically didn't feel well from binging all the time. I wanted to lay on the couch and watch Netflix. So I think that's a lot of it. I think that's a lot of it.

Kirstin:

Yeah. So what is it like for you now, walking in there, being the person that you are now?

Carrie:

I just enjoy it so much, and it is such a fulfilling practice. And the group that I'm with is just a really good group of people, and so, I feel very welcome there and safe there, and it's a very grounding practice for me. And so, it's something that I don't miss, I never miss. I go, even if I'm not feeling great or I'm tired or it's been a long day, and sometimes I think I don't want to go tonight, but I go because it always makes me feel better. And so, I just really enjoy it.

Kirstin:

Yeah, I love it. So what else has happened?

Carrie:

I started dancing again. I used to do a lot of ballroom and swing dancing a decade ago, and I stopped doing it. And I found some classes that I go to and started doing that again for myself. And again, it's just something that I enjoyed doing. It makes me happy. So I started doing that again, and I don't miss it. I love it. So I go and I started dancing, found a little gym that I started going to when I was still in the program. And I was apprehensive about that at first because it has to be a good fit. I wanted it to be a good fit. And I found this little gym that I adore with a trainer that I love and a good vibe and a good group of people. And so, I've continued to go to that little gym. I went through a divorce.

Kirstin:

Yes, you did. And if you don't mind talking about that just a little bit, I think that it could be really helpful for some people to hear about this.

Carrie:

Well, I don't want to go into too much detail, but I was married for-

Kirstin:

Of course, yeah.

Carrie:

Was married for 15 years, and the first half of that marriage was really, really good. And the last half of it was not. And just literally, I was stuffing down my feelings and unhappiness in the marriage with food. And so, I really do think that it was this program that was the impetus for all of these changes in

my life, including disconnecting from an unhappy marriage. And I should say that we worked on it a lot. It wasn't an easy decision. It never is, but it was the right decision. But it was hard, and especially going through a stop binge-eating program when binge-eating had been my comfort mechanism on my coping mechanism for 35 years. And so, it was a challenge, but I'm on the other side of that now. I spent a whole lot of time working on myself, working on the things I learned in the program, working on my portion of the things in the marriage that didn't work out well. And I started dating again. And that was super scary. And I'm dating a wonderful man now, and I'm in a new relationship. And so, that's happening and that's exciting.

Kirstin:

Yeah. And I think that's something that can happen for a lot of people when they start going through this kind of work is that you're taking away the coverup. And when you take away the coverup and you're no longer eating to avoid the problems and avoid the issues and avoid what you don't like, you have no choice but to look at it. And it can be really scary to do that. And that's something that holds a lot of people back, I think, from actually doing this work. But what I think is so important for people to hear from you and to just know is that it can be worked through, the problems can be solved. And even if it results in something that you may not want, like divorce, life really can be so much better on the other side.

Carrie:

You said it so much better than I could. That was it exactly. It was terrifying to go through it. I didn't want that for myself, but there were no other options. And so, now I'm on the other side of it, and I'm so much happier and it was the right decision for me. And I'm living an authentic life that feels good and that I'm proud of, and just didn't expect to find this much happiness on the other side of it.

Kirstin:

Yes. And you created it.

Carrie:

I did. Yeah, I did.

Kirstin:

So we have to know, what is your eating like now?

Carrie:

Well, it's a whole lot different than it was before. When I was active in my binge-eating, I thought about food and managing my weight all day, every day. I had cravings all the time. I would spend hours and hours doing meal prep and planning and counting calories. And I don't do any of that anymore. I usually spend about 15 minutes thinking about my menu for the week, and then maybe two to three hours on the weekend batch cooking for the entire week. And then I eat foods that I enjoy, that I look forward to eating, including pizza, and ice cream, and cookies, and cupcakes, things that used to be off limits that I couldn't keep in the house. I eat that stuff now and I enjoy it.

Kirstin:

And do you keep them in the house?

Carrie:

I do. Yep, I do.

Kirstin:

What's that like?

Carrie:

I remember getting really angry when I first started the program. And you talked about being able to moderate and being able to keep foods in the house. And I was an all or nothing person. I got mad when you said you can have this stuff in your house and you can moderate because no, I couldn't. But guess what? I can, and I do. And this is the first for me in my entire adult life.

Kirstin:

Is it hard?

Carrie:

So sometimes it is, but then it isn't because I know that the binge is never going to be worth it, and it's never going to taste as good as I think it is. And I worked really hard to get to this place. And I've been down that other road before a thousand times, and I don't want to go down that road anymore. Doesn't lead anywhere good.

Kirstin:

Nope, definitely not. Do you feel urges?

Carrie:

Oh, sure. Yeah, I do, but the urges are much less frequent. I mean, it used to be all day, every day. So they're not as frequent, they're not as strong, and they're not nearly as appealing as they used to be. And I am human, and I do overeat, and I have binged in the year that I've been out of the program, but it's been very occasionally, and I don't beat myself up about it. I think about why I did it, what was leading to that, try to learn something from it. I don't panic about it. I don't immediately start restricting and go back into diet mode. I just go on about my day and I don't stress about it and recognize that I'm not perfect and it doesn't have to be perfect. And that's just the way it is.

Kirstin:

It sounds like you have such a clean mentality about this because somebody may be in your shoes and start thinking all this negative stuff about themselves and not believing in themselves. So since you have felt urges to overeat, have felt urges to binge, have binged, what does that make you think about you in the future?

Carrie:

Well, I would say that's one of the biggest tools that I learned in your program is that our thoughts create our feelings, create our actions, create our reactions. I didn't realize I had the option to choose my thoughts and that I had the option to examine my thoughts and see where that stuff was coming from. And I would have an urge and I would immediately start pursuing that urge and thinking about it and figuring out how I could satisfy it without ever giving any thought underneath it. And now I know that there's something underneath it and that I have an option to believe the things that come into my brain. And so, that's been a game changer for me.

Kirstin:

So what do you think about you as a binge eater?

Carrie:

I think of it as something that I used to do. I mean, I don't really think about it. I don't think about it. It used to occupy my every thought all the time, every day. And now I just really don't think about it. Such a healthier mindset. Just food is food, my body is my body, and I don't stress about it. I don't stress, I don't obsess about it. I don't panic about it. I just eat when I'm hungry and stop when I'm full the majority of the time.

Kirstin:

And then if things happen, you don't make a huge deal about it and then try to fix it by overly restricting yourself and making all those rules that you used to make and just going overboard with everything.

Carrie:

True. Yep. I've been a dieter since a very young age, the age of 13. I had so many food rules about what I could and couldn't do, and that is all gone. And it's so refreshing and freeing to just think about food as food. And I wonder if this is true for a lot of binge eaters too, that there's a focus on perfectionism and wanting to be perfect and everything wanting to be perfect and wanting to please everybody. And I had to let go of that and really embrace my humanity, that I'm not perfect and I make mistakes. And sometimes good enough is good enough.

Kirstin:

Yes. Yes. Good enough is good enough. It's not perfect is good enough.

Carrie:

It's impossible. I mean, I held myself to this ridiculous standard that was impossible to meet, and it didn't feel good. And I felt like I was constantly letting myself down. And it is so much more freeing and enjoyable to just good enough is good enough sometimes.

Kirstin:

Yes. To just be an imperfect human who isn't going to be perfect all the time. And you're a work in progress as we all are.

Carrie:

Yeah.

Kirstin:

So something else that you used to do when you were binge-eating, well, a thing that kept you in binge-eating was using food for comfort. So is that something that you still find yourself doing, or how do you get comfort now?

Carrie:

Well, I can say that food is comfort, and I'm okay saying that. And I do get comfort and enjoyment from food. And one of my favorite things to do now is go out to breakfast with friends. And I go and I have my breakfast and I enjoy it, but I also enjoy my time with my friends while I'm there. And I don't obsess about the food that I'm eating or how many calories it was, or what kind of exercise I'm going to do to burn off that food, or how I'm going to restrict later in the day for this big meal that I'm having. I don't stress about it. I go and I enjoy it. That's a comfortable experience for me. I have fun with my friends and then I just get on with my day.

And I've also learned, as far as how else do I get comfort, self-care is a big one, and it doesn't look like what I thought it would look like. So self-care for me used to be checking out of the world. And there is a place for that, and I still do that, and that's okay. But for me, self-care is also cooking for myself. So like I said, usually once a week I cook for the entire week and then it's done because I'm busy. I'm dancing, I've got karate, I go to the gym, I work full-time. And if I'm hungry and tired and I don't have anything to eat, that's dangerous territory for me. And so, self-care is cooking for myself and making sure that I have food ready in the refrigerator when I need it.

It's also moving my body in a way that feels good. So exercise for me used to be about working off my calories or losing weight or trying to change my body in some way. And it's not about that anymore. I do the things that I do because it feels good, because it's fun, because I enjoy it. And on the days when I don't feel like exercising, just taking the dog out for a walk or going and sitting in the sunshine, moving my body in some way feels good to me. And it always makes me feel better. So even on those days when it feels really good to lay on the couch and watch Netflix, that's okay, that's great. But after a certain time, for me, it doesn't feel good anymore. And that's when I need to get outside. And that for me is self-care.

Kirstin:

Yes. So changing, completely changing the relationship with movement and exercise, changing your mindset around it, I think that is so awesome. And also, the way that you talked about eating for comfort, I 100% agree with you. Food is comfort. That's why people go to it, for comfort. It just is. But there's a way to use it for comfort in a way that's actually going to be enjoyable and to give you true comfort as opposed to a way that gives you comfort but then leaves you feeling extremely uncomfortable.

Carrie:

That's true.

Kirstin:

It's okay to eat for pleasure. It's okay to eat for enjoyment. It's okay to eat to comfort yourself if you want to. But again, we have to do it in that way that's leaving us feeling good afterward, which is what you're doing. You're not doing it to the extreme to punish yourself, to escape your life, and again, then creating more of a life that you don't want to have.

Carrie:

So good. So good.

Kirstin:

I love it. Last time on the podcast, you said that you were still working on your relationship with your body. You were working on creating a mind-body connection and fostering that connection. That's what you said. So what is that like now?

Carrie:

I spent a whole lot of time, up until I started your program, completely disregarding my body's signals. I had done so many diets with, eat this many calories, and do this much exercise, and you have to do all these things. And so, I had no idea what it was to actually listen to what my body was telling me. And so, that's a big difference for me is I try to tune in to my body's signals. And if I'm hungry when I get up in the morning and want to eat breakfast, I eat breakfast. And if I'm not hungry when I get up in the morning, I don't eat breakfast. And if I eat... I don't even track calories anymore. So before, I would eat a certain number of calories, and if I was still hungry, oh, well, too bad. I've had my number of calories for the day. I don't focus on that anymore.

So just really focusing on what my body's signals are, and again, finding movement that I enjoy that is fun and not trying to kill myself every time. Every time I go out there for a session doing the things that fill my soul. Dancing, karate, going to this little gym, those things fill my soul. And those are commitments that I keep to myself because I love them, not because I feel like I have to do them or that I should do them, but because it allows me to show up better in my life when I do them.

And just practicing awareness and gratitude. I now realize how strong I am, how capable I am. I focus on the amazing things my body can do instead of the fact that I have cellulite or that I'm worrying about what somebody's going to think of my outfit, or I don't worry about that. And so, I suppose self-acceptance that I have bad body days too. And I think, you know what? This is my body. I have a human body. My body is allowed to change. It doesn't have to mean anything. And so, the self-flagellation is gone.

And I will say that dating again was really, really scary. And there was a time that I probably would have let my own body insecurities get in the way of that. So I had to do a lot of work on myself. I have to love and honor and respect myself and my body, all of myself, even the parts that maybe I don't really love, first. And I deserve with myself an honest relationship, a giving relationship, a kind relationship, a respectful relationship with boundaries. I have to give that to myself first before anyone else can do that for me. And that has been a really big change and a realization for me, and that connection with my body and myself.

Kirstin:

I love that. I love all of that so much. And I bet that it just makes you feel so much better. It just mentally, emotionally feels so much better. It probably makes your relationship better. Your life is just better. Right?

Carrie:

It's so much better, much stronger relationship. We communicate much better because I've done the work on myself to recognize what I need to be able to work on boundaries, set boundaries, communicate about those things, to recognize that I am worthy of love and respect. I deserve that. And so, that's been a big difference.

Kirstin:

Yeah. Has it helped your other relationships in your life as well, like friendships or family? Because even though we're talking about a romantic relationship, all of those things are important in all relationships that we have, communicating, boundaries. It's sharing your wants and your needs and feeling like you're worthy of all of those things.

Carrie:

Oh, yeah. It's made a huge difference in my relationship. I was a people pleaser, no boundaries, accepted very little. And I've let go of some friendships. The nature of the friendship had changed, and it felt like a one-sided friendship, just wasn't a nurturing relationship. And I've got an amazing group of friends. I've got good friendships in my life. I am so grateful for those relationships, and I really want to foster those friendships with my most authentic and vulnerable self. So those people that I can be that version of myself with, I pursue those and put effort into those because that's who I want to be. That's how I want to show up in my life. And so, I nurture and foster those relationships. The ones that don't feed my soul that are one-sided, maybe I don't put quite so much effort into those. And even with my work, putting boundaries around my work, how many hours I'm willing to give to work, that has changed too.

I had no boundaries. I would totally set myself on fire to keep other people warm. It is really, really hard to initiate those boundaries at first and have difficult conversations. And I think that's what my binging was all about, or at least a big component of it is I didn't want to deal with uncomfortable emotions and difficult conversations and letting people down. And in the process, I let myself down. So I had to learn all of those things for the first time in my 40s, but that has strengthened my relationships and made me a whole lot happier on the other side of it.

Kirstin:

Yes. And I do know about one very special friendship that you have, a friend that you made in the program.

Carrie:

Yes. There is a lady named Jennifer. We were paired together in our small groups during our program, and we've stayed in contact all this time. We continue to talk once a week, every week. And Jennifer came to visit me over the holidays this year, and she stayed with me, and that's the first time we met in person. Other than that, it's just been conversations on the phone every week. And that is a friendship that I treasure, and it is such a blessing to have her in my life and that I got to meet her and we got to spend time together. And I'm hoping that I can go see her sometime of near future.

Kirstin:

I love it. Making friends and keeping them. And I'm sure it's really helpful to have the support of somebody else that has gone through the same things, so many of the same things that you have also gone through and having that continued support as you work beyond what you started working on.

Carrie:

Sure. Yeah. She's been through it too. So we can talk about our struggles and our challenges in maybe a way that isn't as easy to talk about with someone that hasn't been through it.

Kirstin:

Yes. Just another really cool byproduct from going through this. So what tools did you learn in the program that you're still using regularly that help you with your eating and to not binge and all of the things?

Carrie:

Well, I will confess that I am not a big written word person. So I have this lovely three ring binder right here. All of the program materials and everything that I printed out. But I will confess that that doesn't speak to me. So what I have taken away from it are pieces that I put into action in my daily life. So the

one that we talked about was just the thoughts, feelings, actions, reactions. That whole process was huge for me, that I had the option to choose my thoughts, that I needed to examine my thoughts. I didn't realize that was an option before.

I learned that I'm a feeler, so I feel things in my body before I'm consciously aware of that. And I used to just stuff that down, stuff it down. I never felt it. I never allowed it to come up to the surface. And I was so busy stuffing it down that I was disconnected from my body, what I felt, what I needed, what it all meant. And so, I didn't realize until I went through the program that I am this feeler, that I need to feel the things in my body, think about it, figure out what it means, rationalize it, and then I can verbalize it. And I don't know if that's typical for other people, but I didn't know that about myself until I went through this program. So that's been a big one for me too, and also went with my relationships. It's recognizing that that's how I function as a person, then I got to figure it out for myself first, and then I can talk about it, but first I have to figure it out.

I would distinctly recall having a coaching call with you, and I was so concerned about what other people think. And so, that's been another huge thing for me as I care a whole lot less about what other people think and realize that my opinion is the only one that matters. And so, I'm not so worried about what people think about somebody my age doing karate or dancing, what I'm going to look like, or if it looks silly. I do it because I love it, and they can think what they want to think, and that's their business. So that's been huge.

Also, a big takeaway for me is that discomfort is a part of life. And food for me was about escaping that discomfort. And being able to feel it and move through it has been a big one for me. My friend Jamie says, "Choose the right kind of hard." And she's right about that. So it's hard to feel those uncomfortable feelings, to have difficult conversations that aren't fun, to go through a divorce, to start online. All of that stuff is really uncomfortable. But what else is uncomfortable? Is being stuck in a cycle of binge-eating. And so, that's been a realization is that the discomfort is just a part of life and you're going to have to deal with it.

Kirstin:

Yes. Yes. I love that. Oh, something else.

Carrie:

Oh, I got one more. And this wasn't really something that we specifically talked about in the program, but something that worked for me was meal delivery kits. I had been dieting for so long that I didn't know what it looked like to cook and eat a "normal" meal, whatever normal is. Normal is different to everybody. But by doing that, it helped me figure out what a portion looks like, what real food looks like. It came pre-portioned right to my door, so I didn't have to go to the grocery store, especially in the beginning, and be tempted by all these foods. So I did a meal delivery kit for quite some time, and then kind of figured out on my own what worked for me and what didn't. But that's something that I did for quite some time.

Kirstin:

Yes, I love this. So many things that you're doing to keep you in a successful place, in a good place. And I love how you started. You're like, "I have all of this content from the program. I don't even use it," but I think it's such a good point that... So I tell people when they join, I'm going to give you a lot of stuff, and you don't need to use all of it. Even with the podcast, I give people a lot of stuff, but you don't need to use all of it every single day in your life. There may be a time where you're like, you know what? There was a worksheet that I think will be really helpful. And you open up that binder and you use it and it helps you, but day-to-day, it may not be what you're going towards and it might be

something else. And I think it's so important for everybody to find what it is that works best for them and helps them the most.

Carrie:

Yeah, agreed. And I was one... When I started the program, I was so stressed out about doing it just right, doing it correct. I printed out everything, and I three hole punched it, and I put in tabs, and I put in all these things, and I wanted to do everything in the exact right order. And if I felt like I didn't get it, I'd go back and listen. I feel like I couldn't progress to the next lesson until I captured this one. And ultimately, that's not what worked for me. And that's okay. Enough is enough. It doesn't have to be perfect.

Kirstin:

Yes, it doesn't it. It doesn't. And just because I'm presenting it in this format of this is the first lesson, this is the second lesson, doesn't mean that you have to do it in that way. You find the piece that is most important to you and you go for it. Or if you're not even sure, then you have the structure to follow, which is great. It's just, again, making it work for you is what's going to be the most helpful. Okay. So lots of things have happened. What do you think is the most exciting change that has happened for you?

Carrie:

The biggest one is that I'm just so happy. I'm so happy on this side of it. When I was binge-eating, I just felt trapped in my life. I felt stuck in my life. I felt like a hamster on a wheel, just doing the same things over and over again and being unable to get off of that wheel. And I was at war with my body and myself. I feel like I had to hide pieces of myself because I was ashamed and embarrassed about the binge-eating. And where I am now, I'm so proud of the life that I've built and the things that my body can do. I'm living my life instead of sitting on the sidelines. I'm having fun and living authentically in a way that feels good and that I'm proud of. I have people tell me all the time, "You look amazing. You're absolutely glowing. You look so happy." I get it all the time. People I work with, strangers just come up and tell me, "You look so happy. What's your secret?" The secret is that I'm happy.

Kirstin:

I look happy because I am. Who would've thought? So what's in store for the future? What are you currently working on improving? What's going to happen?

Carrie:

Well, for me, I mean, it's always a work in progress. And for me, a big one, like we talked before, is figuring out my feelings. I feel these sensations in my body. Paying attention to that and figuring out what they mean and being able to verbalize and communicate that is a skill that I'm actively working on all the time. That's new to me. And so, I'm working on that and continuing to develop an emotional vocabulary after stuffing it down for so many years. Vulnerability and authenticity with myself and in my relationships, that's scary when you as a binge eater, the binging, you said, it covered up so many things. And I so desperately wanted to be rid of it, but at the same time, it was the only comfort and coping mechanism that I knew. So it was really scary to get out of that and try new things. So just continuing to work on that authenticity, vulnerability, honoring myself, my needs, my feelings, setting boundaries with myself, with others, continuing to find joy in my activities and in my life. And when things aren't enjoyable anymore, I'm going to switch gears and figure out what else brings me joy and happiness and just keep working on myself.

Kirstin:

It's so good. And I want to go back to what you were talking about with the feelings. I'm sure so many people are just like you. And if anybody is in this position, I think a great place to start is just acknowledging I feel uncomfortable. Even if you're not able to put a word on the emotion, if you're not able to really pinpoint where it's coming from, at least we can just start with, I'm feeling uncomfortable, and acknowledge that. And be willing to just feel that discomfort, even though we don't know what it is, even though we don't know what it means, but just being willing to be in it and knowing that you are safe in it, that you are not going to be harmed by this feeling, and it's going to be okay to feel it.

Carrie:

Agreed. Totally agreed. When I first started, I mean, it's a skill just like any other skill, and you have to learn it and master it and get better at it. And when you first do it, probably not going to be real good at it. And that's all I could say is I feel something. I feel something. I can't tell you what it is, I can't put a name on this emotion, but I feel something. And at first, that was really, really overwhelming and really, really, really strong and scary. And the more I'm developing that emotional vocabulary, I can now say, this uneasiness in my stomach. I'm anxious. What am I anxious about? What's going on in my life that I'm anxious about right now? I couldn't do that at first. So continuing to develop that.

Kirstin:

Yes. And even as you get good at it, there are still times where I don't know right away what I'm feeling. This has happened to me a few times recently where I'm feeling all kinds of things and I don't even know what it is. I don't know why. But what is really helpful for me is journaling about it, doing a thought download, getting pen to paper, and exploring what's going on in my life, in my mind. And it will come up. It will show its face, whatever the thoughts are that you're thinking, and you'll be able to pinpoint that feeling. So that can be, I think, a really helpful tool. It works for me most of the time, but again, just starting with I'm uncomfortable. There's feelings happening. Just being okay with that.

Carrie:

Definitely. It gets easier.

Kirstin:

It does get easier. It sure does. So any final words of wisdom, thoughts, anything that you want to share? Being a person who has had so much success and is doing so amazing, such a fulfilling life.

Carrie:

Just to say there's nothing special about me. I was a binge eater for 35 years, and I had done everything that I thought was possible to address it. And I never thought I would have a "normal" relationship with food because, again, normal is different for everybody, but there's nothing that makes me uniquely special. If I can do it, then other people can too. Just lean in, lean into the discomfort, lean into the fear, be willing to try something different.

Kirstin:

Yes.

Carrie:

Be authentic. Try to discover what your authentic self is. Don't hide pieces of yourself if you can, just try to figure out who you are as a person. Be authentic and discover what that means and recognize that it might change as you go through life. And that's the best parting words I can think of.

Kirstin:

I love that. And I love the idea of being authentic because so much of what this is allowing yourself to have what you want, to have what you need instead of withholding it in so many different ways. So when you know yourself and what authentic is for you, what your wants are, once your needs are, it's so much easier to go and get them instead of either using food to fulfill them or using food to distract yourself from what you want and need. And like you said too, that's also going to change. What I wanted and needed 20 years ago is not the same as now. And then, into the future, it probably won't be the same either. So we have to keep connecting with ourselves and checking in with ourselves to see what that is, to see what it is in the moment, day-to-day, just having that relationship with yourself. You were talking about fostering relationships with other people, foster the relationship with yourself, see how you're doing, see if you're still connecting.

Carrie:

That's the most important relationship of all is the one that you have with yourselves. Every other relationship that you have in your life, whether it's work or friendships or family or romantic relationships, is going to be based on the relationship that you have with yourself. Got to have a solid foundation. So yeah, that's a big one.

Kirstin:

Yes. Awesome. Well, thank you so much for being here, for coming back. You are my very first return interviewee success story, still being successful in so many ways. So thank you for being here. It's been wonderful.

Carrie:

I'm honored.

Kirstin:

Yeah. Awesome. Thank you.

Carrie:

Thank you.

Isn't she amazing? Look at this life that she created for herself. So much more fulfilling, feeling so much better about herself, having a changed relationship with food, with herself, and with her body. She is setting boundaries, which is so important, improving all the relationships in her life, she has so much joy and pleasure that have nothing to do with eating food, she doesn't stress about food and eating, binge eating is something she used to do, and I have no doubt that she will continue with all of this and continue to improve upon all she created and keep getting better and better.

And I do want to point out something that she mentioned about her eating. It hasn't been perfect in this last year. Like she said, she had very occasional binges and I love that she didn't hold back from sharing that because it's real and honest. And I want you to know that this is a common thing that happens during this process.

It's common to do really well for awhile and then have very occasional binges as the frequency is decreasing until you stop. This whole process of stopping binge eating is exactly that, a process, and sometimes that process includes binges, even after you've done well for awhile and believed that you'd never binge again.

Everyone has a different timeline. For some people, binges stop abruptly and that's it forever. For some people, they stop for awhile and then big events happen in their lives, things like divorce that Carrie talked about, and other big, life changing things, and it's possible that you might experience urges to binge and give in to them.

I personally was not an abruptly done person. I had a binge that I thought was my last, and I did so well for months afterward, and then it happened. I binged again. Then there were lots of times I binged after that and times that I had what I considered to be borderline binges. And I thought of them this way for two reasons. One, I no longer felt that out of control feeling that I used to feel with every binge so it seemed to me more like excessive overeating than bingeing, I actually referred to it at the time as "splurging" and two, because there's no exact amount of food or calories that qualifies a binge, it was hard for me to say. Mostly, I think it was because of how I felt while I was eating. Very present, aware, and in control, even though I was choosing to keep eating. But anyway, there was the big ending, or so I thought, and then for awhile after that, I would binge and then splurge.

But the frequency diminished a great deal over time and now it's been years since I've binged or even come close to eating an amount I would consider even a borderline binge and that out of control feeling is completely gone. I'm always aware of what I'm doing and that I'm making the decision to do it.

And I want you all to hear this because this is how it might go for you, or maybe how it's gone for you.

And I want you to make sure that you're handling it like Carrie has and how I did.

You don't give up, you don't stop believing in yourself, you don't make it mean you can't stop, you don't go back to your overly restrictive ways, you don't be hard on yourself, beat yourself up, or call yourself a failure.

You have compassion for yourself, forgive yourself, encourage yourself, learn from what happened, strategize for the future, and commit to doing better.

And you will.

And you will get to where you want to be.

And your life can be as amazing as you want it to be while you're getting there, just like Carrie's is. You don't have to wait, and creating your best life while you're working on your eating will make it even easier to work on your eating.

So let your process be your process and just like Carrie, binge eating will become something you used to do.

And if you want help as you go through this process, and put binge eating in the past, I can help you.

Registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program is open but, it's closing this Friday, May 5th of 2023 at 10am ET so don't wait any longer to sign up.

Go to coachkir.com/group to register, all the info about the program is also on that page, and if you have any questions that aren't answered on that page, email them to info@coachkir.com.

Alright, I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Carrie, I for sure did, and I'll talk to you next time.

Bye bye!