

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #249: Judging Your Emotions

Hi! How are you doing? Good? Good. Let's jump right in and talk about judging your emotions.

This is an important topic because for a lot of you, one reason why you binge eat is because you're eating to avoid, numb, or distract from your emotions.

Either you start eating because you don't want to feel how you're feeling and then that eating snowballs into eating more and more or, your emotions have built up over time or your emotions are really intense and the more emotion you feel, the more discomfort you feel, the more you eat and you go into it knowing that you're going to eat an excessive amount of food.

So if you're going to change this, you'll need to be willing to feel through your emotions and process through them instead of eating to try and manage them and change them.

You'll acknowledge how you're feeling, you'll accept how you're feeling, and you'll choose feeling feelings instead of choosing eating.

You'll allow the feeling to be there without trying to force it away and you can do some helpful things like deep breathing or movement or laying still or doing something you enjoy while you're allowing it.

Eventually, it will pass and you'll feel better and you'll feel a lot better doing it this way, the slower way, than trying to feel better quickly by eating a lot of food.

Now, this is totally doable for you and you are capable of doing this but, it's probably going to be challenging at first if you're someone who hasn't allowed themselves to feel their emotions for a long time.

And it's also going to be more challenging for you if you're judging how you're feeling.

What judging your feelings can look like is you thinking thoughts like "I shouldn't be feeling this way," or "You're making too big of a deal about this," or "It's wrong to feel this way."

What I see most often is that it comes down to two reasons why you're judging how you feel.

Either you think that the circumstance you're in doesn't warrant this emotion or this much emotion, or you think that you shouldn't feel certain emotions.

I personally don't really do the second one, tell myself there are emotions I shouldn't feel but I have caught myself thinking that I'm being too emotional in certain circumstances or that I shouldn't be reacting as strongly as I am.

There were two times recently that this happened to me and because they both involved other people in my life I'm not going to share all the details out of respect for them.

The first time, I found out news about someone I've known for a very long time and after the initial shock of what I learned had worn off, I started crying and I was crying for like an hour. And I was so confused about why I was crying because I didn't think I should be crying about this. I was judging my reaction to the situation.

The second time, I'd been dealing with something that was hard for over a month and when I talked to a friend about it, again, I just started crying and kept crying as I talked to her about it. And what kept coming up for me was that I shouldn't be crying because it's only been a month, I was judging myself for being so emotional about something that I believed most people would say hadn't been going on long enough for me to be crying about it.

Sometimes we judge ourselves because we think we're being too emotional about something, that we shouldn't feel emotional about certain things, or that we are making something into a bigger deal than it is.

Then there's the other one where we have judgments about certain emotions that we feel and this is something that's usually taught to us either directly by a parent or other authority figure or by your culture.

Women sometimes get taught that it's wrong for them to feel angry. They're told to act like a lady.

Men sometimes get taught that it's wrong for them to feel sad or scared. They're told to man-up.

Both men and women can be in a culture that teaches them to not show any kind of emotion, to suppress all emotions, and this can include extreme positive emotions like joy and excitement along with extreme negative emotions.

And for the men and women examples, it's not just limited to the emotions I said, there can be so many.

Now, I do think there's a difference between choosing to not express your emotions to other people and choosing to not express them to yourself and it's the latter that can become a problem.

For example, that first example I mentioned about myself, when I got news about a friend, that happened just a couple hours before I had a coaching call in my group program. When I got on that call, I didn't share my emotions with my group members, I just put my emotions aside and got to work, did my job, and coached my face off.

But before and after that call, when I was with myself and also when I was talking to someone close to me about it, I went through it, I expressed it, I felt it, and worked through it.

We don't have to share our emotions with everyone all the time but, at least share them with yourself.

But you might not even want to be with your own emotions if you're being judgmental of them.

If you're judging, you're probably going to try and push them away or distract from them, neither of which will help you in working through the emotions so they don't keep coming back.

When you judge your emotions you're making it harder for you to actually work through the emotions because you're adding another layer of work for you to do.

Not only do you have the emotion but now you have judgement too.

And you get focused on the judgement and that stops you from focusing on feeling the feeling, understanding your feeling and why it's there, and allowing it to pass through your body.

Judging will lead to ignoring your feelings.

I had someone email me about this topic and they told me that they find themselves feeling resentful, angry, and annoyed and then tell themselves to just be thankful and let it go. But then they get more resentful.

It's like they think they're not justified in feeling how they feel and I hear this from people sometimes where they have so much good in their life that they should be grateful for what they have and not have feelings about certain things.

You don't have to pretend like it's fine, which is what the emailer said they would do.

If it's not fine, it's not.

She feels how she feels, her feelings are valid.

If I'm crying about what happened with my friend or about something that hasn't been going on for very long, my feelings are valid.

If we feel a certain feeling, it's valid.

There's reasons why we feel how we feel and the reasons are not wrong.

They are right for us, they are true for us.

Even if other people might disagree. And they might.

They might think you're making a big deal out of nothing or that you're being too emotional or that you shouldn't feel what you feel.

But you know what, if it's how you're feeling, then it's exactly how you should feel, because you are.

When I really took the time to understand where my tears were coming from, it made sense to me. Maybe other people wouldn't react how I did but it was how *I* did.

And judging myself, and you judging yourself isn't going to help anything.

But accepting how you feel will help.

Once you accept how you feel, that's when you can lean into it, feel through it, and let it happen.

And it will pass when we do that, as all of our feelings do.

So if you're someone who has been judging your feelings, here's what you're going to do.

First, you're going to notice that you're judging.

You have to acknowledge that it's happening if you're going to do something about it.

That's what I was doing when I was crying to my friend. I said out loud, "I'm totally judging myself for crying about this and for being so upset about this."

Then, I said, "but this is how I feel right now. This is what's true for me right now."

I let the judgement go and accepted how I felt and I allowed myself to feel what I was feeling without holding back or trying to change it.

Now, if you're able to do that as quickly as I was, awesome.

But part of the reason why I was able to do it was because I believe that all of our feelings are valid and we're supposed to feel however we're feeling and it's not wrong to feel how we feel in any given moment.

Now, that doesn't mean that even though I believe that, that my brain is never going to offer judgement. Clearly it still does, I just told you that it does.

But you can believe something to be true and sometimes your brain will still tell you the opposite and that's okay.

You can manage your thinking and tell your brain what's really true and let that judgment thought go.

But in order to do that as quickly and as easily as I did, you have to get yourself to the same beliefs I have, or not exactly the same word for word but the same idea where your feelings aren't wrong.

So to do that, you first have to know what your current, judgmental beliefs are.

Do you believe you're not supposed to feel certain feelings? That it's wrong to?

Do you judge your reactions to things, thinking you're overreacting or are too emotional?

Here's the thing about that one. Who says your reaction is an overreaction? Who says that you're being too emotional? How emotional is too emotional and what kind of reaction is too much?

It's just an opinion. There is no one right, perfect amount of emotion or reaction for everyone in every situation.

So if you react how you do and you get as emotional as you do, it's right for you.

I have a friend that would get more emotional than me about a lot of things. Was she being overly emotional or was I being not emotional enough? Who's to say who is feeling the right amount of emotion?

I believe that we were both feeling the right amount of emotion for ourselves.

So explore your thoughts about your emotions, specific emotions and your emotions in general, and your thoughts about how much emotion you feel, how intense your emotions usually are, look at your thoughts and beliefs and see what judgements come up for you.

And then you're going to drop the judgments, drop what you think is wrong and accept that when it comes to emotions, this is how you are and it's how you're supposed to be.

Now, is this how you'll always be? I don't know. I actually believe that I feel and express more emotions now than I used to and maybe you'll do the same or maybe you'll do less.

But what we do know is that this is how you feel now, and it's okay.

You don't have to tell yourself that you shouldn't feel this way, that you should be grateful or thankful for what you have and never feel sad, feel jealous, feel stressed, feel frustrated, or any other feeling, that you're making too big of a deal out of something, or that you're too emotional.

You are feeling how you're feeling because of what you're thinking about a circumstance, a situation, a person, about something, and what you're thinking is true for you, it's important to you, it's what you believe, and your thoughts aren't to be judged either.

It's where you are right now and judgment of it won't help.

Acknowledge it, accept it, and allow yourself to feel how you're feeling.

Alright, go be okay with how you feel, no matter what the situation or the feeling.

I'll talk to you again soon, bye bye.