

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep 251: Celebrating Awareness as Progress

Hi! Today I am talking about celebrating awareness and about seeing awareness as progress.

This topic came to mind when I was coaching one of my group members about a recent binge she had had.

As she was telling me about it, she said that usually when she binges she is on autopilot, barely or not at all aware of what she's doing, but this time, she was fully aware yet she did it anyway.

She was really disappointed about this because she thought that once she was conscious, and was aware and present with herself, then she would never make the decision to binge.

Now, I of course was going to help her understand why she made this conscious choice to binge so she would know what she needs to work on moving forward but, before that, we worked on her judgement of herself with this binge.

She was looking at herself making the conscious choice to binge as something that was bad.

That's why she was feeling so badly about it.

But I gave her a different perspective.

I remember doing the same thing after my last, out of control binge.

I made a conscious decision to go and buy a bunch of food, knowing I would eat it all.

I didn't feel out of control and wasn't zoned out.

I was aware and present the whole time.

And afterward, I saw it as progress.

I was aware and didn't feel out of control, and I saw that as a win.

Something was changing within me. My mind was clearer, my urge was different, and I was different.

Change was happening.

I was not the same as I had previously been, I was moving in a positive direction.

Progress was happening.

Now, for myself and my group member, could we have done better? Could we have made a better decision? Could we have done more?

Of course.

But not bingeing isn't the only thing worth celebrating and not bingeing isn't the only thing that means you are progressing.

Simply having awareness of something that you didn't used to have awareness of, or rarely have had awareness of, means you're progressing.

And having this awareness is a crucial part of this process.

You can't do anything about something you're not aware of.

If you're not aware that you're wanting to binge, that you're preparing for a binge, or that you are bingeing, then you won't be able to stop yourself.

Something that happens a lot when I coach my group members is that they gain awareness of things that they had not noticed before.

Them not being aware of certain obstacles, certain beliefs they have, certain lies they've been telling themselves, has stopped them from overcoming them.

They didn't even know they existed or were overcomeable!

So often we have blind spots that we can't see until someone on the outside of our mind is able to point them out to us.

And so often we see things as "this is just how it is" or see it as fact when actually, it's not and when it's not a fact, and it doesn't just have to be how it is, that means we can change it.

So gaining awareness is a crucial step in the process.

And outside of a coaching session, when you're on your own like my group member was at the time, meaning it was just her, I wasn't there coaching her in that moment, having awareness of anything that used to go unnoticed is worth celebrating and is considered progress.

That could mean being aware that you are feeling an urge instead of just reacting to it, being aware that you are thinking about bingeing or are thinking negatively about yourself or your body and recognizing these as thoughts you're thinking instead of just letting them run through your mind unnoticed or just agreeing with them, you're actually aware that the thought is there.

It could mean you're aware that you're feeling a particular feeling instead of again, just reacting to it or ignoring it, are aware of what you're doing because you're not zoned out, are aware of what you're planning to do, you notice yourself planning to binge.

All of this means that you're becoming an observer of yourself.

Things aren't just happening without your awareness, it's like you're looking at yourself from a different perspective, like you're outside of yourself looking in, and you're seeing what you're thinking, feeling, and doing instead of just thinking, feeling, and doing it.

It's that moment of, "What am I doing? What am I thinking?" that you may not have had before.

And not in a judgmental way but in way that you're waking up to what's going on instead of sleep walking through it.

It can be so amazing to have this awareness, to see yourself, if you allow yourself to see it as a good thing.

And you can still see it as progress, and see it as a win, even if you end up bingeing afterward.

There's been countless times that my group members have told me about binges they had and while telling me the story, they include wins and successes along the way and that is how you want to do it.

They look for these wins because our wins, our successes, even if they're small, can help to boost self-esteem and confidence and help us stay motivated.

And when I talk about celebrating, it doesn't have to be like a huge party, it can be something so simple like sharing it with someone, which is what I encourage my group members to do with the rest of us in the group, or just reveling in the proud feeling that you feel and soaking it in, or treating yourself to something special and again, it doesn't have to be a huge thing.

Ultimately you're just enjoying the feeling you feel, the proud or accomplished or happy or excited feeling that you're feeling and being in it.

And when you do that, it's positive reinforcement. You'll be motivated to do more of what will result in that feeling again.

Celebrating yourself more often will for sure help you to move forward with your growth and improvement in this process.

So find the things worth celebrating, find the ways that you're showing progress, find the wins and the successes that happened in the midst of what you're calling a failure.

They are there if you look for them.

So if you have awareness, if you notice your thoughts, feelings, or actions, if you are paying attention to yourself and are consciously making decisions, be proud of that.

Especially if it's something you haven't done before or have only rarely done.

And, even if you don't do anything differently afterward.

You're taking a step in the right direction and after this step, you're going to move on to another one that will help you to continue making even more progress.

Having awareness is worth celebrating, so celebrate it and feel good about yourself.

You're making progress.

Alright, that's all for today, I'll talk to you again soon. Bye bye!