

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #253: Changing Your Relationship with Your Binge Foods

Hi! Next week, on Wednesday June 14th of 2023 at 3pm ET, I'm doing a free workshop called Drop the Diet Mentality.

Diet mentality is a big contributor to binge eating and I want to help you change your mentality if it's contributing to your binge eating.

If you're stuck in thinking about and following all the diet rules you've learned in the past, if you feel deprived, restricted, or resentful with your eating, if you obsess about what you shouldn't and should eat, then join me in this workshop.

Come live next Wednesday if you can but if you're not able to, it will be recorded and the recording will be available for a limited time afterward.

You can register for the workshop and access the recording if it's still available by going to coachkir.com/workshop.

You can become more relaxed with your thinking around food and eating. You don't have to stay stuck in your diet mentality. I'll help you do it.

Now today, let's talk about your relationship with your binge foods.

Pretty much everyone who has struggled with binge eating for awhile, whether it's for months, years, or decades, has some "go-to" foods that they binge on.

You probably don't always binge on the same foods but if I asked you what you've binged on the most or what you usually binge on, I bet you'd easily come up with an answer. It might be one thing, it might be several but there are foods you've labeled as "binge foods," or maybe another similar term.

Now, you probably have some thoughts about your binge foods, and they're probably not all positive thoughts.

You might think positively about how they taste and how you feel when you start eating them but, you might also fear them, feel anxious or nervous about them, maybe even angry or sad.

You might fear them, or feel anxious or nervous about them because you think you'll binge if you eat them.

You might feel angry because you think it's not fair that you can't eat them without bingeing.

You might feel sad because you want to eat them and enjoy them without bingeing but think you can't.

And as long as you're thinking this way about these foods, and other negative thoughts or thoughts that make you feel uncomfortable about eating them, you're not going to have a good relationship with those foods.

Imagine if you felt and thought that way about a person in your life. You feared them, felt nervous or anxious about them, were angry or sad when you thought about them. Imagine if you feared that bad things would happen if you spent time with them. That would not be setting you up to have a positive, good, healthy relationship with them.

The same goes for your binge foods.

Now, having that positive, good, healthy relationship with food is important because that is what will cause positive, good, healthy behaviors for you around those foods.

Your relationship with those foods is based on what's happening in your mind, your thoughts.

When you think well, you feel well, and then act well.

Same goes for when you're thinking negatively, you feel negatively, and act negatively.

Think about what you do when you're around those foods, worried that you'll binge on them. Or when you're looking at them feeling angry about not being able to eat them.

Most people would say that that's likely going to lead them into a binge and it makes sense because our thoughts cause our feelings and our feelings drive our actions.

If you think you're going to binge, and that makes you feel scared, that scared feeling might actually drive you to eat food, maybe to numb the fear, maybe to make the fear go away, maybe because you don't know what else to do.

If you feel sad, you might eat the food to comfort yourself.

If you feel angry you might angrily, rebelliously eat the food.

So if you want to calmly eat those foods, be satisfied with a smaller amount, and not binge on them every time you eat them, or never binge on them again, if you want your behavior around those foods to change and for your relationship with those foods to change, your thoughts about them need to change.

And when this all happens for you, it will be so much easier for you to eat those foods that you have binged on without bingeing on them. Even when you're alone at home with them.

Most people I work with would like to be able to be around their binge foods and not binge on them. They would like to have them in their home and not binge on them.

I know that for sure was a desire of mine back when I was binge eating.

I wanted to be like the people I considered to be normal eaters and they all had joy foods in their homes without bingeing on them and even without overeating on them every time. Maybe sometimes, because that really is normal but a lot of them time they'd just have a reasonable amount and be done.

And in order for me to become a person like that, I had to change my relationship with those foods first.

Something I see people do time and time again is think that if they bring the foods into their home and have them available to them and allow themselves to eat them whenever they want, then they'll just get used to them and stop bingeing on them.

But that's not usually the case because these people still have all the fear, worry, anxiety, nervousness, anger, and sadness attached to those foods.

That means they're going to continue to engage in the same undesirable behaviors that those feelings are going to drive them to do.

Bringing the food in, in itself isn't going to change how restrictive you are in your mind, or change your desire to eat excessively, or change how you feel about those foods.

You're changing your circumstances by having the food be more accessible, but you're not changing what's going on in your mind.

Changing your circumstances sometimes can make it easier for us to change how we think, feel, and act but it's not a guarantee.

Think about how many times you thought, "If I just changed my job, or living situation, or got into a relationship or was single, or whatever, then I will stop bingeing." And then you did change that thing and you didn't stop bingeing.

Happened to me all the time.

So simply bringing the food into your home instead of never buying it isn't going to change you.

You have to change you, change your mind, intentionally.

And you'll start doing this by uncovering what your thoughts are about those foods now.

What do you think about those foods that creates the relationship that you have with them now?

Maybe it's one of the ones I mentioned before.

You think you'll binge if you eat them, or it's not fair that you can't eat them without bingeing, or you want to eat them and enjoy them without bingeing but think you can't.

Maybe you're thinking they're a "bad" food. Maybe you're thinking you shouldn't eat them.

Even calling them a "binge food" can have an effect on your relationship with them.

I know it just makes sense to call them a binge food because you've binged on them so many times but it's still a term that you're choosing. It's a label for that food that you're choosing.

I can't tell you how many times I binged on ice cream and I sure as heck labeled it as a binge food for a long time.

But not anymore.

I never call it that. Maybe when I'm talking with my group members or here on the podcast I might say it was one of my binge foods, but I'm saying it in the past tense and acknowledging that it isn't anymore.

Now, it's just ice cream. That's it.

I don't still look at it and think it's a binge food and that's part of the reason why my relationship with it has changed and why I don't feel how I used to feel when I was around it or when I thought about it.

So take note of how you're labeling the foods beyond what they factually are. They are factually cookies, not factually bad and not factually a binge food.

And take note of what you think about yourself with those foods and how you think you'll act when you eat those foods.

No matter how you've acted in the past, it's changeable. You don't have to act that way and the only reason why it's happening is because you're thinking thoughts that are causing you to feel feelings, that drive those actions and those thoughts you're thinking that start that whole process are changeable.

You don't have to think that you will binge on those foods.

It's not inevitable, even if it has literally always happened.

The future can be different for you.

You can learn how to not do it and that right there is a thought that you can choose to think instead.

I can learn how to not binge on that food.

Or, it's possible I might be able to not binge on that food.

Or, even, there is a small chance I could not binge on that food. A small chance is still moving beyond no chance.

Or what about, if I'm with other people I won't binge on that food. That one right there is true for a lot of people and what it does is show you that you are capable of not bingeing on that specific food. Sure it may be easier when you're with other people versus when you're alone but still, you won't always binge on that particular food.

What these options for thoughts do is help you to feel less scared, anxious, whatever feeling you feel about that food. It probably won't make the feelings go away entirely but at least you're moving in the direction you want to go in. In the direction of having no fear, no anger, no sadness. You're building the bridge to get there with these thoughts that are called bridging thoughts.

You will get to the thoughts you want to be thinking about these foods, thoughts like, "they're just chips, I fully trust myself around them, or I don't binge on those foods anymore," one bridging thought at a time.

But for now, less of a feeling is good. Less is better.

It's okay if you still feel a little fearful or nervous or whatever feeling, and just know that this is part of the process of changing your relationship with the food.

Again, you're going to take some time to notice and uncover what you think about the foods you've binged on.

And if you're wanting to bring those foods into your home and have them around without it being a big deal, do this work before bringing them in.

And also, when you're in situations that are easier for you to handle, work on stopping eating and not eating.

What most people who binge do is only focus on the beginning of eating it when it tastes so good or only focus on wanting to keep the pleasure and good feelings going, or how they're not going to allow themselves to eat it again.

But instead you're going to think more about why you don't want to keep eating, or why you don't want to eat that food, or how you'll feel if you eat it or eat more, or that you can eat it another time if you want to and if you can't because this is a one time deal, that you will be okay if you don't eat it or if you don't overeat or binge on it.

You are going to change your relationship with the foods you've binged on and when you do, it will be so much easier to not binge on them anymore.

And actually, the workshop I'm doing next week about dropping the diet mentality will be really helpful for this so make sure you check it out. Again, go to coachkir.com/workshop to register for the workshop if it hasn't happened yet when you're listening to this or to access the recording afterward if it's still available.

Alright, I'll talk you again soon, bye bye!