

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #266: How to Change Your Thoughts

Hi! Next week, from Monday September 11<sup>th</sup> through Thursday September 14<sup>th</sup> of 2023, I'm going to be doing something that I haven't done in awhile and I'm so excited about it! I'm doing free, multi-day training! It's going to be 4 days in a row of classes that are going to give you tons of helpful tools and tips that will help you to stop binge eating.

I'll be covering why you binge eat, getting down to the root causes and specifics about why it's happening to you and how you're going to stop, how to feel in control and make better eating decisions, and how to stay on track so you can create long-term success.

It's going to be really helpful for you to go through this intensive training where I'm focusing on the most important things you need to know to stop binge eating.

And, you'll be able to ask me any questions you have.

So if you want to spend 4 days with me, getting down to the nitty gritty of how to stop binge eating, go to [coachkir.com/training](https://coachkir.com/training) to register.

If you're not able to make it to the live calls that I'm doing next week, it's all good because they will be recorded and will be available for about a week after the training is completed.

So if stopping binge eating is a top priority for you, make time to watch these 4 days of classes.

You deserve to make time for yourself to do this.

Again, go to [coachkir.com/training](http://coachkir.com/training) to register for this free training, and do it even if it's already started when you hear this or it's the week after it's over because you'll still be able to watch the recordings for a limited time.

Alright, now, onto today's episode topic, how to change your thoughts.

Changing your thoughts is really what needs to happen in order for you to stop binge eating and it's the main focus in the coaching I do in my Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program.

Your thoughts cause you to feel how you feel and your feelings drive your actions.

So your thoughts are where your actions and behaviors begin.

Your thoughts are the root cause of your feelings and actions.

So when you change your thoughts, your feelings change, and so do your actions.

When you are feeling an urge to binge and you give in to that urge, it's because of what you're thinking about that urge, about yourself, about the food, or about bingeing.

When you are not allowing yourself to eat certain foods, it's because of what you're thinking about that food, about yourself, or about your body.

When you're feeling an uncomfortable emotion, it's because of what you're thinking about the circumstances you are in.

There are tons more examples I could give for how your thoughts contribute to binge eating but I'll stop there for time's sake so hopefully you get the idea.

Just know that whatever you're doing, it's because of what you're thinking and if you want to do something else, you need to think something else.

Now, sometimes, changing what you think is easy. Sometimes you change what you're thinking and you don't even really put in effort to do it. But sometimes, you have to be more intentional about it, it might take longer for the new thoughts to stick and for the original thoughts to go away or at least show up significantly less frequently, and you have to put in conscious effort to do it.

So let me first give you an example of those times when you might not even know you're doing it. And I want to show you this to help you get on board with that idea that *you* actually can change your thoughts because sometimes people think they're not capable but we all are. We all do it all the time.

One example I use to show this is when you're mad at someone and then not mad anymore. The thing that they did still happened so the reason why you feel differently, why you don't feel mad anymore, is because your thoughts about what they did changed. What they did didn't change, your thoughts about it did.

Let's say that someone told you something about a person you know, and you believed it. So now you think this new thing about this person. But then someone else tells you that it's not true and they show you evidence that proves it to be false. Now, just by getting this new information, you no longer think

what that first person told you. As you got information, your thoughts changed with really no effort on your part.

Then there are the times when you do know you're changing your thoughts but it's easy. Fairly often, this is something that happens with my group members. They tell me something and immediately, once they say it out loud, or once I challenge it with one question, they know it's not true and right then and there, they're able to let go of that original thought and change it to what *is* true.

An example could be that they say, "I'm a horrible person because I binged." I then ask if that's really true and immediately they say, "no," and they've changed what they think about themselves. They're seeing the truth. And now, they're going to act from a place of compassion and understanding rather than from a place of thinking they're a horrible person, which means they're be acting in a much more useful way since thinking they're a horrible person will cause them to feel bad which will drive them to act badly.

Sometimes it's so easy to see a more useful way of thinking and to actually grab on to that more useful way and that happens when you see what's really true and what's really false.

But then there are the times when it's not that easy.

This is what I run into often with my group members and it's the reason why people come to me for coaching.

They don't know how to get from one thought to another and make it stick.

And that's what I'm going to walk you through today, the steps to do that.

Now, I do want to first preface this by saying that although I'm going to give you step by step instructions, sometimes it's still really challenging for us, all of us, even me, to change our thoughts on our own and this is why I offer my help with this inside of The Stop Binge Eating Program.

So if you're not able to do this with every thought that is contributing to your binge eating, there is nothing wrong with you. You're simply a human and us humans can't always see everything that we need to see when it comes to our thoughts or aren't able to gain a new perspective on our own and that's totally normal. When we are changing what we think, we need to be able to be an observer of ourselves and that's not always easy to do.

So if you want my help, this is something I work with people on all the time, consider joining me in the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program.

But in the meantime, do as much as you can with what I'm giving you today or if you're able to change all the thoughts you want to change with these steps then awesome! Get it!

So step one is that you're going to find out what you're currently thinking.

So many of us have no clue. We just think our thoughts and respond to them without even realizing what we're thinking in the first place.

So the best way I know of to find out what you're currently thinking is to either free-write or free-speak.

Without editing yourself, without judgement, without overthinking it, without trying to write or say what you think is the right thing, just write your thoughts on paper or speak your thoughts either to yourself, to a voice recording app, or to someone you trust.

You're just getting your thoughts out and when you just write or speak freely, you're letting your authentic thoughts spill out and this is exactly what you need to do in order to get started when you aren't clear on what exactly your thoughts are.

So step one is to be or become aware of what you're thinking.

And once you've let your brain run freely either onto paper or out of your mouth, you're going to choose one thought.

Step two is to choose one thought. You're going to work on one thought at a time.

I know you may want to work on more, and you will, but you're going to go through these steps with one at a time.

So after you've chosen a thought, step three is to see the effect of that thought.

You chose that thought because you think it might be unhelpful or unuseful, because you think it's causing outcomes that you don't want, and now you're going to show yourself the truth about that thought's effects. You're going to show yourself if it is indeed unhelpful and why.

And you're going to do it by writing out a thought model.

Now, I've talked about The Thought Model in its entirety only a little bit throughout this podcast, and I use it often when coaching my group members, and I'm going to walk you through it right now.

And I want to tell you that just like with this whole process of changing thoughts, creating a thought model is sometimes easy and sometimes challenging. When I went through my coach training we spent a lot of time on learning how to create these so if you don't get it right away or aren't always able to produce effective ones, it's okay. Just do your best.

So here's what you'll do. You'll start by writing down the thought you've chosen.

Above your thought, you're going to write what circumstance this thought is related to.

The circumstance is going to be a fact related the thought, or it's going to be a situation that triggers the thought, or it can be what the thought is about.

So examples would be if your thought is, "I can't eat cookies without bingeing on them," then the circumstance could simply be "cookies." It would be what the thought is about.

If your thought is, "I always binge when I'm home alone," then the circumstance could just be, "Home alone" because that's the situation that triggers the thought.

Or if your thought is, “I ate a ton of ice cream,” then the circumstance could be, “I ate ice cream.” So you’re taking out the word, “ton” which is a subjective word, I’m assuming you didn’t eat a literal ton of ice cream, and we’re keeping the circumstance objective, factual. So it could even be, “I ate 3 bowls of ice cream.” Still getting down to the facts and taking away any exaggerations or opinions.

So the circumstance is just the facts, facts about the thought, facts that trigger the thought.

So you have your thought and you have your circumstance.

Then below your thought, you’re going to write how you feel when you think that thought.

This is going to be only a one word emotion. No sentences, just a one word emotion like, sad, or anxious, or scared, or powerless.

Then below that, you’re going to write what you do when you feel that emotion.

When we feel emotions, we are driven to take certain actions and behave in certain ways. So when you feel that emotion, what do you do? Write down any actions you take, or even actions you don’t take, when you’re feeling that way.

And the last thing is the result of that action. When you do what you do, what happens? What’s the outcome?

And you’re going to see that the result ends up being related to your thought.

And that is the end of your model.

Now let me give you an example.

Let’s say my thought is, “My body is unattractive and disgusting.” I hear versions of thoughts like that quite often from people so you might be able to resonate with that one.

So the circumstance would be, “I have a body.” Notice how it’s just facts, no opinions, no interpretations, just a simple statement that we can all agree on. We can all agree that I have a body.

So we have the circumstance which is “I have a body,” then my thought about that circumstance which is, “My body is unattractive and disgusting.”

Now, when I think that thought, I feel ashamed. That’s the one word emotion.

When I feel ashamed, my actions are to hide away and not see anyone and eat to numb how I feel.

And the result is that how I’m acting is unattractive and disgusting.

Now I can see the effects of that thought. I feel ashamed, I hide and eat, and I act unattractively and disgustingly.

So you have your circumstance which is just objective facts, then your thought that gets triggered by that circumstance, your emotion that you feel when you think that thought, the action or actions you are driven to take when you feel that emotion, and the result of you taking that action.

Model complete.

Now, what this has just done for you is to show you everything that happens when you think that thought.

It shows you how you feel, how you act, and what the ultimate result of you thinking that thought is.

So now that you are seeing the effect of that thought, you get to decide if it's useful for you or not and if you want to keep it or change it.

And if you do want to change it, you will use what you've learned in this model as evidence to show you that that thought is not useful for you.

It is now very clear to see why that thought is one that you want to change.

So step three is seeing the effect of the thought.

Now for step four, if you've decided that you want to let go of your current thought, you're going to decide what you *want* to be thinking.

You're going to decide on what thought you want to change your original thought to.

Now, here's an important caveat.

It has to be related to the same circumstance that the previous thought was.

The circumstance will not change. Only your thought will.

So you're not going to change that you have a body, that you ate 3 bowls of ice cream, or think about something different than cookies, or change that you are ever home alone. That will stay the same and you're going to decide what you want to think about it.

Now, if what you decide you want to think isn't believable to you, if what you want to think is that your body is beautiful and you love it, and that sounds like total BS to you, then dial it back.

Find a thought that you *do* believe. And one that will produce a better emotion, action, and result for you.

And you can write out another thought model with that new thought to see if it does.

Now, I know that sometimes it can be challenging to find something else to think.

This happens especially when I'm working with people on thoughts about their body. They have no idea what else to think that's believable besides, "It's unattractive and disgusting."

And if you are stuck here, without any ideas, it's okay. At least take some time to try and come up with something and if you're drawing a blank, you can just move on to the step five.

Or if you do come up with something but are having a hard time letting go of the original thought then move onto step five.

But if you do come up with something and you believe it and you can easily change to that thought, then you're going to skip to step six.

So, step five, is to go back to that original thought and dig a little deeper to understand why you're having a hard time letting it go.

Now, this is probably the most challenging of the steps for most people but it can also be what creates the biggest "aha's" and insights for people.

If you're having a hard time letting it go, then you're seeing truth in it or have some beliefs below the surface.

So a few questions you can ask yourself to help with this step are:

"Why is this not a fact?"

"Why do I believe this thought?"

"Where did this thought come from?"

Of course what question will be most helpful is dependent on what the thought is. When I'm coaching I don't follow a script, but instead, based off my experience, I know what questions I can ask that will move us in a useful direction.

But start with these questions I gave you and see what you find beneath the surface of the thought.

And when you do that, you might find a new thought that you'll easily be able to see as completely false, or you're going to find a new thought to find the falseness in and change.

So going back to the example I was using, you can ask, "Why is it not a fact that my body is unattractive and disgusting?" And the answer is that not 100% people would agree. If it's a fact, it's proven to be true, and we'll all agree. But we don't. I bet not everyone would use those words to describe the body we're talking about as unattractive and disgusting.

So just by challenging the trueness of this thought, you can start to see that it's not a fact that my body is unattractive and disgusting, I just think it is.

And because I just think it is, that means I don't have to keep using those words and keep feeling ashamed.

And this is a helpful bridging thought for a lot of people who can't think of better feeling descriptions when they think about their body.

"I just think my body is unattractive and disgusting."

It's a small shift but it's moving in the right direction toward neutral and away from negative.

So if you're having a hard time letting go of a thought or finding a better feeling thought, question the thought.

Why do you think you think that? See what answer then comes to your mind.

Now, step six you will only do once you've moved on to a place where you're seeing that the original thought isn't a fact, that it's not 100% true.

It's not a fact, not 100% true that my body is unattractive and disgusting. Not everyone would use those words. Those words are words I've been choosing because I saw it as fact but in actuality, it's not.

So now you're going to practice thinking that new thought you came up with in step four or if you came up with it in step five like I did with, "I'm just thinking my body is unattractive and disgusting," and you're going to practice redirecting yourself to it when you hear the original thought.

So when I say you're going to practice thinking it, that means you're going to think that thought in your mind, on purpose, as often as you can. You're going to rehearse it in your mind. You're going to drill it into your mind.

And when I say you're going to redirect to it, that means that when you hear yourself think the original thought, you're going to dismiss it and tell yourself the new thought because when you do that, and you believe that new thought, that's when you will create that new emotions, actions, and results that you want.

The more you practice the new thought, the more time you spend ingraining it into your mind, the sooner it will become a part of you and become a new way of thinking for you that's as natural as the original thought used to be.

And if you're using a bridging thought like the one I landed on about my body, then you're going to keep repeating this process when you feel ready, in order to change to the next bridging thought, and to the next, until you're where you're thinking what you ultimately want to be.

So that, is how you change your thoughts.

Step one is to be aware or become aware of what you're thinking.

Step two is to choose one thought to work on.

Step three is to see the effect of that thought by using the thought model to see what emotions, actions, and results are caused by that thought.

Step four is to decide what you *want* to be thinking.

Then if you're having a hard time fully embracing the new thought and letting go of your original thought step five is to go back to that original thought and dig a little deeper to understand why you're having a hard time letting it go.



And step six is to practice thinking that new thought you came up with that you want to change to and to practice redirecting yourself to it when you hear the original thought.

Now, I do want to repeat that this isn't always easy. It's not always easy to create a proper thought model, to find what else you could be thinking, or to let go of your original thought.

But again, try your best, just like with all the tools and tips I offer throughout all the episodes.

And if you want help, I can help you, just as I've helped hundreds of other people who have gone through my program.

And I'm also going to give you extra help in the free 4 day training I'm offering next week that I mentioned at the top of this episode so for sure check that out if you're listening to this episode close enough to it's release day.

You can register at [coachkir.com/training](http://coachkir.com/training).

Alright, so those are the steps for changing your thoughts, do your best as you go through them, and I will talk to you again soon. Bye bye!