

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #268: Eating for Comfort

Hi! This Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2023 is the deadline to register for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program so if you're joining, register now!

All those changes you want to make with your eating habits could happen for you and as a result, you could feel better about yourself, about your body, have more trust in yourself, feel more in control, have more confidence, and the list goes on and on.

So much could change for you.

So, you can get all the info and register at [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group) and once you do register you'll be able to get started right away with The Stop Binge Eating Course before the program officially begins on October 3<sup>rd</sup>.

And if you have any questions that aren't answered on that page, send them to [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com).

Alright, now let's talk about eating for comfort.

When I ask people why they eat when they're feeling certain emotions, an answer I hear often is "for comfort."

Those emotions they're feeling are uncomfortable and if they eat, they don't feel that discomfort. They start feeling comforted as soon as they start eating that food and feel it for as long as they're eating.

Although, sometimes the comfort stops before they stop eating but, for the most part, eating equals comfort.

There is this association that so many of us have made in our lives that eating is comfort and this is something we were either taught by someone else, or multiple people, or it's something we learned on our own.

Maybe we were given food when we were sad, nervous, stressed, pretty much anything but happy.

Maybe we were told that food will make us feel better, or heard other people saying that they needed foods when they were feeling uncomfortable.

Or maybe we ate when we were uncomfortable, noticed how much better we felt when we did, so we kept repeating the behavior.

No matter how you came to view eating as comfort, that association has stuck with you and it's become a go-to way to get it.

And we gotta acknowledge that it does in fact work.

If it didn't, you wouldn't keep doing it.

And it's not bad to eat for comfort, just like I talked about back in episode 260 about how emotional eating isn't bad. You don't have to never do it, or be hard on yourself if you do do it. Sometimes eating for comfort is exactly what you want to do and it works for you and there isn't a problem with you doing it. If that's the case, eat for comfort if you want to.

But we also have to acknowledge that if you eat too much in order to try and keep the comfort going, then it's not going to come without consequence.

And, if you're eating to get comfort, instead of creating true comfort, then most likely it will be temporary and once you finish eating, you'll be back to feeling uncomfortable.

So when I say "true comfort" I'm referring to the actual feeling of comfort.

When you're eating, it's like a discomfort cover up. It's like you're distracting from it.

And the way to feel truly comforted is through your thoughts.

Emotional comfort and emotional discomfort are both caused by your thoughts. You feel uncomfortable because of what you're thinking and you also feel comfort because of what you're thinking.

So when you eat, you're not really resolving those discomfort thoughts, you're just ignoring them.

But when you change your thoughts, change your perspective, change what you're telling yourself, that's when you can create true comfort that will relieve the discomfort.

So for example, if I'm thinking that my friends don't care about me because they don't ask me to hang out or to do stuff with them, then I'm going to feel an uncomfortable emotion like sad, excluded, or insignificant.

Now, in order to comfort myself when I'm feeling this way, I could eat food. I could feel better while I'm eating but once I'm done, I'll most likely just go back to feeling sad, excluded, or insignificant as I start to again think that my friends don't care about me.

So that's one option.

Another option, would be to work on my perspective of the situation.

They haven't been asking me to hang out or to do stuff. Does that really mean they don't care about me?

And my answer to that question is no, they don't not care about me. I know they care about me.

And the truth is that we all just have different lives with different obligations and interests and we have other friends and families and there's just a lot that we're all doing.

Maybe they're just caught up in all that they're doing that I'm not on their radar at the moment and that doesn't have to mean they don't care.

Personally, I have friends and family that I care about a lot but don't hang out with often. My frequency of seeing them is not reflective of how I feel about them.

I'm just doing other things.

So when I start to shift from they don't care about me to they do care about me and they're just choosing to do other things, and I honestly believe that, and I also believe that if I contacted them to get together that they would accept the invitation and we'd get together. Because they care about me and our friendship. And also because they haven't shut me down yet.

So when I change my thoughts about the situation of them not contacting me, I feel better. I feel comforted when I believe that they do care about me, even if they're not contacting me.

I don't have to eat food to comfort myself, I can do work on my thoughts to comfort myself.

I can tell myself an alternate truth, something else that feels better that is believable to me in order to feel better.

And honestly, the thought that they care about me is actually so much more believable to me than them not caring about me when I really think about it.

Now, eating might be quicker comfort than doing all this thought work to work on my thoughts about the situation.

But what's quicker isn't always the best option.

What's quicker isn't always going to give us the outcome we want.

And most people who tell me that they use food for comfort do not in fact want to be using food for comfort all of the time.

And this is why we do this work on our thoughts, so we can get comfort in another way that's actually going to create true comfort.

After I get to the place of believing that my friends care about me, I'm not going to revert back to the uncomfortable feeling I feel when I'm thinking they don't care about me. The comfort isn't going to be temporary like eating food would be. I've resolved that thought that caused me to feel uncomfortable.

So if you want to experience true comfort when you're feeling an uncomfortable emotion, don't take the quick and easy way out.

It will be so much more worth it to take the longer way that will take more effort.

Now, I do want to also talk about doing things in order to create comfort and what I mean by doing things is doing an activity to create comfort.

When I talk with people about comforting themselves and ask them how they think they can experience comfort without eating food, most people immediately start talking about things they can do.

They can take a warm bath, call a friend, wrap themselves up in a blanket, have a warm cup of tea, watch a favorite movie or show, things like that that sound really comforting.

And although you *can* feel comforted when you do things like that, it's not a guarantee.

And the reason why is because it's not what we *do* that causes us to feel comfort.

It's what we think.

Our actions don't cause us to feel, our thoughts do.

And we could do those things while continuing to think all the thoughts that are making us feel uncomfortable.

Think about hugs. We think of hugs as being comforting but they aren't always.

You could get a hug when you don't want one, or from someone you don't want one from, and because your thoughts are not aligned with feeling comfort, you won't feel it.

You could take a warm bath and continue having thoughts that make you feel uncomfortable and you won't feel comforted in that bath.

Sometimes things like that will make it easier for you to feel comforted, sometimes it will make it easier for you to take your mind off those thoughts causing you to feel uncomfortable, sometimes they will promote thought change.

But it's not guaranteed.

Now, I'm not saying you shouldn't do those things that you think will create comfort for you but, just know that if you do do them and you're not feeling more comforted, then you need to do some work on your thoughts.

So if you want to experience emotional comfort when you're feeling emotionally uncomfortable, changing your thoughts, changing your perspective, changing what you're focusing on is how you'll do it.

And if you're at a loss for what you can think in order to move yourself into comfort, think about what you'd tell a friend who is thinking what you're thinking.

If your friend was telling you that someone they care about doesn't care about them, what would you tell them?

If your friend was telling you how disgusting their body is, what would you tell them?

If your friend was telling you that they're never going to be able to stop binge eating, what would you tell them?

If your friend was telling you that they're a screw up and can't do anything right, what would you tell them?

Sometimes we're so much better at comforting other people than we are at comforting ourselves and if that's what's happening for you, take a step back and talk to yourself like you are your friend.

Because you are.

Be your best friend.

Alright, so true comfort is not going to come from eating food, it's going to come from your thoughts.

And if you're doing an activity you think should be comforting and it's not, it's because you're still thinking thoughts that are causing you to feel uncomfortable.

The key to true comfort is in your thinking so put your focus on your thoughts, put in the effort, and take the longer route toward comfort.

Alright, that's what I have for you today, and if you want help with creating more true comfort for yourself, and anything else binge eating related, the deadline for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program is this Friday, September 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2023 at 10am ET. You can register at [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group) and I will see you very, very soon if you're joining me.

Bye bye!