

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #270: The Importance of Preparation and Application

Hi! Today I'm talking with you about preparation and application which are two things that are equally important when it comes to stopping binge eating.

A lot of the time, people are only doing one of them, or maybe neither of them, and are then confused about why they're not making progress and keep bingeing.

And here's why they're confused.

They *think* they're doing what's necessary but they're really not.

They *think* they're doing enough but they're not.

They're not seeing what they're missing so I wanted to make this episode in case you're someone who is missing one or both of these that I'm talking about today.

So let's first start with not doing preparation or application at all.

This happens sometimes with people who listen to the podcast or do my free trainings and workshops. And actually, this happens sometimes in my group program when people are watching the videos in the course or are watching the group coaching calls, or even after they get coaching themselves.

They listen, they hear the information, they think it makes sense, they get it, they learn something, but then they don't do anything with it.

It's like they hear it and then it just leaves their brain.

But it doesn't really leave their brain, most likely it's still in there but, they're not accessing it. They're not thinking about it anymore.

Or maybe they don't think about it until after they binge. They binge and then think, "I should have done that thing I learned," but then again, after that, they don't think about it again until after the next binge.

Basically what's happening with these people is that they're not remembering what they learned and if they don't remember, they're not going to be able to do what they learned to do and put it into action.

People wonder why they don't remember to do things in the moment. They wonder why they make the decisions they make without considering that thing they learned.

They wonder why their habitual thoughts and thought patterns aren't changing.

They wonder why they aren't applying what they've learned and a lot of the time the reason is because they haven't prepared to.

They aren't prepared to apply what they learned.

They aren't rehearsed enough.

And that's what the preparation for preventing a binge and for making different eating decisions is.

It's rehearsing, it's practicing, it's mental repetition.

You don't just hear something once and expect it to be top of mind when you need it.

You hear it and then you repeat it to yourself over and over so it gets ingrained in your brain.

So many of the things that are easiest for us to recall are things we have repeated in our minds.

So whatever you want to recall, whatever you want to be easy to remember, repeat it to yourself.

You probably do this with other things you don't want to forget.

Maybe you want to remember to pick something up at the store so you keep reminding yourself. You keep bringing it to the top of your mind.

That's what you're doing here too.

You keep reminding yourself of why not binge eating is so important to you so you can feel less desire to do it in the moment when you start feeling an urge.

You keep reminding yourself of why you're going to allow yourself to eat any foods you want to so you can more easily catch your brain when it goes into diet mentality, especially when it's saying those foods are bad and then you can remind yourself that they're not. They're just delicious foods.

You keep reminding yourself of the thoughts that you want to be a part of your regular thinking, the new beliefs you want to have, why you're going to make the decisions you're going to make, why you're going to feel through your feelings, why you're not going to think so meanly about your body.

You keep reminding yourself of these things so you don't forget and so it's easier for you to apply them when you need to.

But, I must make sure you're aware of one important thing when it comes to this preparation I'm talking about.

Don't try to do too much.

Don't try to memorize too many thoughts or plans.

Don't overload yourself because if you do, one of two things could happen.

Either you end up not remembering something that could be really helpful for you and do remember things that are less helpful or, you go into all or nothing and since you don't have the energy or time for all of them, you do none of them.

I've previously had group members of mine make a long list of thoughts they want to practice, thoughts that they want to become habitual thoughts, and it's a lot for them to take in.

And when they look at the list, they get overwhelmed and don't bother with it.

Don't overwhelm yourself.

There may be a lot that you want to work on, and you will work on all of it.

But at any given time, only do what doesn't overwhelm you, what you think is doable, and what will be the most impactful for you right now.

There may be things you want to mentally rehearse that aren't impacting your life right now.

Maybe you want to work on how you'll handle eating around the holidays but the holidays are a few months away. You can put that on hold.

Spend your energy working on what is most relevant to you right now, what is impacting your life and your eating the most right now.

Preparation is important because the more you think about the thoughts you want to become habitual thoughts for you and the more you think about your plans and strategies and what you want to do, the more quickly it becomes a part of you, part of your thought patterns, an ingrained belief, and the easier it will be for you to remember it when you need it the most.

So definitely keep learning, and then mentally rehearse, think about what you've learned over and over, visualize what you're going to do, remind yourself of your strategies, thoughts, and plans, do whatever you can to make sure you don't forget and keep what you want to remember on top of your mind.

Now, preparation is very important, as I've just talked about but, it's not the only thing you need to do.

Something else I see people do sometimes is that they do tons of preparation but, they don't then apply what they've prepared.

When the time comes to actually do what they've prepared to do, they choose not to or they forget to.

Even when we prepare, we can still forget. You can remind yourself over and over to pick up that item at the store and still forget.

I know because I've done it.

This is why it's so much more helpful to write it down or to give yourself a visual reminder of some kind that will help you remember.

Our brains aren't always reliable so we need a back up.

If I need to return something to a store, I'm going to more easily remember to do it if I have it in my passenger's seat where I can see it rather than in the trunk.

If I need to buy something, I'm going to more easily remember to buy it if it's on a list than if it's only in my head.

If you're going to remember to do what you've prepared to do when a surprise urge comes up or when that same old thought comes up, it's going to be easier to remember if you have a visual cue, whether it's a post it posted somewhere, or something else that will remind you of what you need to be reminded of.

Using both mental rehearsal and a visual reminder can be helpful if only doing the mental rehearsal isn't enough.

So sometimes you might forget but there's also the times when you simply choose to not apply what you've prepared.

You don't feel like it, you decide you'll start tomorrow, you just don't want to, you think it will be fine if you don't, or some other reason for why you choose to not do it.

You could probably come up with tons of different excuses and if you do, and you then don't apply what you've been learning and practicing then nothing is going to change.

You can do all the prep work that you can but if you don't actually apply it and put it into action, then you won't create new results, new habits, new evidence, momentum, you won't create true change.

It's like reading and memorizing how to ride a bike without actually riding one. You're never going to get good at riding a bike if you don't actually get on one and ride it.

If you never actually feel a feeling without eating to numb or avoid it, then you're never going to get better at feeling feelings.

If you never actually eat a food you've previously avoided eating because you've always binged on it, then you're not going to get better at eating that food without bingeing on it.

If you never actually pause and think through your eating decisions before you eat, then you're never going to get better at making eating decisions and will just continue to be impulsive.

If you never actually take the time to redirect your thoughts when unuseful ones come into your mind, then you're never going to get better at managing your thinking and you'll just keep letting your brain, particularly your lower brain run the show instead of you running the show.

You have to actually do it.

Even if you don't feel like it, even if you would rather wait until next time or tomorrow, even if you are telling yourself you don't want to.

Tell yourself why you do want to.

You want to make these changes for a reason, you want to apply what you've been rehearsing for a reason, and that reason is important to you. Tell yourself what it is.

When you have an important, compelling reason to do something, you will do it, no matter what.

Make not doing it not an option by telling yourself why it isn't an option.

And by the way, that's also something you're going to mentally rehearse and tell yourself over and over – why you're going to do this work no matter what.

This is something crucial that you need in order to do this work - that compelling reason, that motive, something that is going to make you more disciplined.

Because that's why disciplined people are in fact disciplined. They do things even when they don't feel like it and they do it because they know that deep down they really want to, and they want to because they know it's going to help them get what they truly want the most. They're not just focusing on what they think they want in the moment.

They focus on the delayed gratification and their future self rather than only on the instant gratification and their present self.

Do that for yourself. Don't just do what feels comfortable and easy now. Get uncomfortable now so you can create greater comfort and ease for yourself in the future.

Apply what you've been practicing now, don't put it off because the sooner you do it, the sooner you will build the skills you want to have, the sooner you will get the results you want and the changes you want to make.

Have an important, compelling reason to apply what you've been rehearsing, then go through discomfort, put in the effort, put in the time, and create the momentum and evidence that will make it so much easier for you to repeat it and turn it into a habit or a new pattern or a new belief for you.

So if you think you're doing enough but you aren't seeing the results you're wanting, make sure you're doing both preparation and application.

Prepare before the moment and apply in the moment.

Do both.

Get to work on the preparation right now, and keep doing it, and in the moment when you need it, commit to applying what you've prepared by telling yourself why it's so important that you do.

Alright, I'll talk to you next time, bye bye.