

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep 273: Trusting Your Hunger and Fullness Signals

Hi! Do you want to stop feeling urges to binge eat? Of course you do! So then come join me in the free workshop I'm doing next week, on Wednesday November 1st of 2023 at 3pm ET where I will help you do it.

You will learn why you personally are feeling your urges to binge, how you're going to stop feeling your urges to binge, and also what to do if you do feel an urge while working on stopping feeling them since they don't usually stop immediately, it takes some time and you'll want some tools for when an urge pops up.

You can register for the workshop at coachkir.com/workshop and if you're not able to attend live there will be a recording available for a limited time but you have to register to access it, so register now so you don't forget.

Stopping your urges is going to be what stops your binges so definitely come to the workshop live or watch the recording so you can start working on making it happen ASAP.

Alright, and now onto today's topic – trusting your hunger and fullness signals.

You've probably heard a million times that you should eat when you're hungry and stop when you're full, that that's the normal way to eat.

And quick side note, it's also normal to eat when you're not hungry sometimes, like when you eat dessert. You're not hungry but hopefully you're also not full so you have room for dessert, you enjoy the crap out of it, you still feel comfortable afterward, and it's all great.

So the goal for so many people who want to be normal eaters is to most of the time eat when they're hungry and stop when they're full.

They want to wait for their hunger signal to tell them it's time to eat and stop eating when they notice the fullness signal.

But it can be really hard to do that if you don't trust your hunger and fullness signals.

When I didn't trust mine, it was for two reasons, and these are the same two reasons why most people don't trust theirs too.

One was that I thought that if I did eat according to my body's signals then I would gain weight.

The other was because I ignored them for so long. I ate more according to calories and time. I believed that calories were more accurate than what my body was telling me.

I even remember when I was losing weight my sophomore year in college I told my roommate that if I didn't count my calories and eat according to my goal then I would gain weight.

And here's why I had that reasoning.

I thought that I gained the weight I had because without counting calories I didn't have a good enough guide for how to eat to lose or maintain weight.

But really, my body was an amazing guide. I just wasn't listening to it.

I gained the weight because I was eating when I wasn't hungry and eating past fullness. I also drank alcohol a lot my freshman year which also added to my weight gain.

It wasn't my body's signals that were the problem. It was me not listening to them, not honoring them, and not actually eating according to them.

I was doing more of what I wanted to do, not enough of what my body wanted me to do. That's why I gained weight.

Also, because I ignored them for so long after I initially lost weight in college, because my trust was in calorie counting, I lost my trust and connection with my body's signals.

Sometimes I would feel hungry and would think I shouldn't be. I would think that my body was wrong.

I also wouldn't feel full after eating a certain amount and would think it was wrong that I wasn't full yet.

Or, I'd feel full after eating less than I thought I should and I thought my body was wrong for being full already.

There was a lot of arguing with my body, a lot of thinking it was wrong.

Of course sometimes I agreed with it and ate according to my body's signals but because I thought my body was wrong for sending signals when I thought it shouldn't or for not sending signals when I thought it should, I lacked trust in my body.

Basically, I thought I knew better than my body.

But honestly, my body, and your body, are so wise.

I don't think enough of us give our bodies enough credit.

Our bodies are actually pretty incredible and are amazing at taking care of themselves. I mean, look at how our bodies heal themselves during so many different illnesses and injuries. Look at how our bodies function day to day to keep us alive with so many systems going.

And part of what our bodies are capable of is asking us to take care of it.

That's why we get signals to sleep, to warm up, to cool down. Our bodies are asking us to take action in order to help the body survive and regulate.

And that's why it signals us to eat and to stop eating. It can't do that part on its own so when it notices that it's time to fuel up, it asks you to do it. And when it notices that it's fully fueled, it asks you to stop.

Your body is really good at asking for what it needs but the problem that so many of us fall into is us thinking we know better.

And so much of this stems from wanting to lose weight.

We've been taught that in order to lose weight we need to deny our body of what it's asking for.

But, we need to acknowledge that our body's needs aren't what caused weight gain to begin with.

It was us eating beyond our body's needs.

Now, I of course can't speak for all people and all bodies but what I'm talking about here is the case for most people.

Our over desire to eat causes us to eat beyond what our bodies are signaling for us to do.

So many of us have an over desire because it's how we handle our emotions and it's how we experience pleasure.

We all experience a plethora of emotions and for many of us, when we're feeling the uncomfortable ones, we eat to feel better. So when we feel an uncomfortable emotion, we desire eating.

Also, eating is pleasurable and for many of us, eating is our main source of pleasure. So when we're desiring pleasure, that desire drives us toward food because that's where pleasure lies.

And the over desire also comes from being overly restrictive with our eating.

When we under eat, we're going to have a stronger desire to eat than when we're eating adequately.

And when we restrict foods we like and don't allow ourselves to eat them, our desire for them will intensify.

So when we feel this over desire to eat, we eat beyond our body's signals.

And this is so important to know because if you want to eat more quote "normally," and stop gaining weight, ignoring and arguing with your body's signals isn't going to help you.

Working on your over desire, working on your mind is what will.

Your signals are most likely fine. Now, sometimes people's hormones are a little out of whack, ghrelin, leptin, and insulin can all have an effect on your hunger and fullness. And sometimes lifestyles or eating choices can affect those so you might feel false hunger when you're not truly needing fuel or you might not feel full when you're supposed to.

I know that can happen to me sometimes if I'm lacking sleep or if I'm eating too much overly processed foods, sugar, basically things that cause a big spike in my blood sugar. But when I get more sleep and alter my eating I'm soon back to normal.

Now, I say that with caution because I don't want you to assume that your hormones are out of whack and therefore so is your hunger and fullness. Take a good hard look at how you're feeling, how you're sleeping, and what you're eating before you make that assumption.

Because most likely, for most of you, your hormones are fine and therefore your hunger and fullness are fine, even if they don't align what what think your signals should be like and how often you experience them and when you experience them.

So give your body a chance to prove itself to you.

Pay attention to your body and see what it has to say. Hear it when it's making a request to start or stop eating.

Honor those signals and see what happens.

And be honest with yourself about how often you're eating according to those signals and how often you're eating according to you just wanting to eat.

And what's going to be really important as you're rebuilding this relationship and trust with your body, is that you're okay with a little weight gain in the process.

I know for so many of you that the thought of gaining weight is terrifying. But what if it was just a temporary part of the process of you rebuilding connection and trust with your body?

We all want to be normal eaters and normal eaters are connected with and trusting of their bodies. That's partly why they don't have to put so much thought into when they're going to eat and when they're going to stop eating.

If you want to get there, weight gain might be part of the process because you're relearning about your own personal signals and you're also going to be working on your over desire for food.

So if you do gain some weight, don't react by ignoring your body's signals again. That's just going to exacerbate the problem and can cause you to feel urges to binge which will drive you to binge.

With so much of the work you need to do to stop binge eating and create your ideal eating habits, there might be times when weight gain happens and it doesn't have to be the end of the world.

Weight gain only means what you make it mean. You don't have to make it mean anything negative about you as a person and you don't have to hate on your body. You can see it as part of the process and then keep going with the amazing work you're doing.

You can build trust in your hunger and fullness signals and if you don't even know what they feel like anymore, then your first step is simply paying attention to your body.

Check in throughout the day to see if you notice any signs of hunger.

Check in while you're eating to see if you notice any signs of fullness.

I know it can seem kind of foreign when you haven't been doing it for a long time but, also know that recognizing hunger and fullness is an innate ability that you were born with. You're now just reconnecting with it.

Be patient with yourself and with your body.

And also, stop arguing with it.

If your body is saying it's hungry, it's hungry.

If it's saying it's full, it's full.

Just like if your body tells you it has to pee. Don't argue with it, just pee.

Just eat. Just stop eating.

And I know, the stopping part is easier said than done but, when I say that here, I'm saying it as opposed to arguing with your body about it saying you're full.

This is not the time for me to go into detail about how to stop, I do that in many other episodes and will continue to. Here, I'm saying to stop arguing about what your body is saying and put in effort to stop.

So I guess it would be better to say, "Just try to stop and do your best."

Alright, pay more attention to your body and eat more according to your body's amazing wisdom that it has for itself and the more you do, the more trust you will have in it.

And also, don't forget to register for the free Stop Feeling Urges to Binge Eat workshop next week by going to coachkir.com/workshop. The workshop is on Wednesday November 1st of 2023 at 3pm ET and there will be a limited time recording available for those who register so register now!

And I'll talk to you next time. Bye bye!