

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #276: Mental Restriction, Deprivation, and Permission to Eat Anything

Hi! Before we get started with today's topic I just want to remind you that there are only a couple more days left to register for The Stop Binge Eating Program.

This program is going to help you to not only change your eating habits but to help you to stop obsessing about food and thinking about it too much, to feel better about yourself, to feel better about your body, and to just feel more comfortable, at peace, and free with food. Food doesn't have to have a hold on you like it has and you can feel more in control.

Registration is closing this Thursday November 16<sup>th</sup> of 2023 at 10am ET and you can get all the info and register at [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group). And if you have any questions that aren't answered on that page, you can email them to [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com).

Now can be your time to get this done once and for all, with my help, as you and I work as a team, the whole way through.

And one of the things we're going to be working on a lot in the program, and that members of the group will get personalized help with, is today's episode topic. Mental restriction.

Being too restrictive with your eating is one of the main causes of binge urges. When you restrict too much, you urge for what you're restricting because either you physically need it or you mentally want it.

In today's episode, I'm talking about that mental part.

The physical part is when you're not eating enough food to fuel your brain and body so your brain urges you to make up for what you're not eating, and sometimes to eat even more because it wants to prepare for future under eating if you've gotten into the habit of under eating.

The mental part is when you're simply not allowing yourself to eat what you want to eat. It's not necessarily a physical need, it's just something you want and you're not allowing yourself to have it.

So you might love these particular pastries from your favorite bakery but you never let yourself eat them.

Or when your friends order pizza, and you love pizza, you don't eat any.

And it's not because your body has a negative reaction to it, like it has a sensitivity, intolerance, or allergy. It's not because you're full. It's not because you don't want it.

You do want it but, you're telling yourself you can't have it or that you shouldn't have it. You're telling yourself it's bad. You're telling yourself that if you eat it, something bad will happen like you will binge or gain weight.

You are restricting this food from yourself out of fear, perceived obligation, or because you think you have to or that it's the right thing to do.

And here's what happens when you do that.

There is this food that you like and you want it. But you tell yourself that you can't have it. And mind you, you can have it, you're just telling yourself that you can't because again, you think it's bad, or that something bad will happen if you eat it, or you shouldn't have it because some person or some diet told you you shouldn't. So you don't eat it but, it's not an empowered decision that you're making because you want to make it. It's a decision coming from obligation or fear. And because it's not an empowered decision, it's not what you really want, it's not a decision you're making where you love the reasons for not eating it and your reasons for not eating it outweigh the reasons to eat it.

The other night I was offered a cookie after my meal, and it looked good, and the people who did eat one said they were good. Part of me wanted it but, I was full and I didn't want to be fuller than I was. So I declined because my reason to not eat it, which was that I didn't want to be fuller than I was, for me outweighed my reason to eat it, which would be to experience the pleasure of the cookie. Saying no was an empowered decision for me and it was my decision. It was no one else's and I didn't say no because I thought I should or that I thought I couldn't eat it or because cookies aren't healthy. I said no because I wanted to.

When you say no when your reason to say no isn't really your reason, it's a diet mentality reason, or your only reason is that the food is bad for you, or you think it's wrong to eat it, that's when you can get yourself into trouble.

That's when you're going to feel deprived and feel restricted.

And those feelings aren't going to happen just because you're not eating the food, it's because of what you're telling yourself about not eating that food.

Had I sat there and I thought, “I really shouldn’t eat that cookie,” it wouldn’t have felt good. Had I told myself I couldn’t eat it because it’s bad, it wouldn’t have felt good. Same for if I feared I’d gain weight if I ate the cookie.

But I did feel good because saying no was genuinely what I wanted to say.

And might I also add that before the cookie was offered, I ate some delicious peanut butter pie. I said yes to that because it had been a little while after dinner, my fullness had faded a bit, so I had room for it and I’d had it before and knew it would be delicious. I said yes because I didn’t have a good reason to say no.

Was it nutritious? Nope. Did I need it for fuel? Nope. Would I gain weight from eating it? Unlikely and if I would, it would be minimal anyway because really, it was like half a slice because I was sharing it.

And none of those were a good enough reasons for me to say no because it’s okay to eat foods that aren’t nutritious, that aren’t for fuel, and it’s okay to gain a little weight *and* eating half a piece of pie isn’t guaranteed to cause weight gain anyway.

I said yes because I knew it would be yummy and I would still feel good after eating it. End of decision making.

And I said no to the cookie because although it would probably also be yummy, I would have felt too full if I ate it. So I wanted to say no and I did.

Now, when I said no, it was easy for me to stop thinking about it. We played a game after and the only time I thought about the cookie was when I saw the other people eating one. And when I saw them, I reminded myself of why I didn’t want one.

But when you’re saying no when you don’t have reasons you like for saying no, when you are saying no simply because you think it’s wrong to eat it, and you’re feeling deprived or restricted, that’s when you’re going to keep thinking about it.

That’s something that can lead to obsessive thinking. It can lead to a lot of chatter in your mind.

And not only can it cause you to feel an urge but, if you’re thinking that eating it is bad, then if you do eat it, and eventually you probably will, you might eat a lot of it or other things that you think are bad because you’re in bad mode now, so you’re going to go all in on being bad, and get all the bad in now, before you get back to good tomorrow.

Restricting yourself in this way can cause you to rebel. It can cause you to fall into all or nothing.

For so many people, the reason why they feel urges to binge is because they’re not allowing themselves to eat what they want to eat, even though they’ll feel physically fine if they do.

They’re not allowing themselves to eat it, so their desire for it builds because we want what we can’t have and the more we tell ourselves we can’t have it, the more we want it, and the desire builds into an urge that they finally give in to and they binge on it and maybe other things too.

And what’s important to hear is we *tell* ourselves we can’t have it.

But we absolutely can. It's available. And when we binge, we do have it.

It's not that we can't have it, it's just that we're telling ourselves we can't for reasons that make us feel deprived and restricted.

We're taking away our own freedom in our minds. We don't really lose the freedom. The freedom is always there. But in our minds we take it away.

That's when it becomes a problem.

It's not a problem if you legit can't have something because it's not available. It is a problem when it's available and you tell yourself you can't, you shouldn't, it's bad, or it's wrong.

So if you want to feel free, if you want to feel good about not eating something, you have to mentally give yourself freedom of choice and permission to eat it.

I had permission to eat the cookie both from the person offering it and from myself.

Some of you only have permission from the other person but not from yourself.

You're not even giving yourself permission to choose. It's just a no, no matter what's going on with how you're feeling and what's going on with your body.

And then if you do eat it, you feel guilty because you did what you didn't have permission, from yourself, to do.

Now you think you did something wrong.

So giving yourself unconditional permission is one of the things that will help you to stop feeling deprived which can lead to urges to binge and to stop feeling guilty about eating certain foods.

And to be clear, giving yourself permission doesn't mean you're going to choose to eat anything and everything. Those are two different things.

There's having permission meaning it's allowed and then there's deciding what you're going to do with that allowance and permission.

You can, and now you'll decide if you want to from a place of feeling free, calm, and empowered instead of from a place of feeling deprived and restricted.

Much better decisions will be made from the free, calm, and empowered place.

Now, when people start doing this work of fully allowing themselves to eat the foods they want to eat, they think what they need to do is to eat the foods they haven't been allowing.

And that is part of it and it will be helpful.

But the truth is, you don't even need to eat the food to be in allowance and to give yourself permission.

Allowance and permission are mental.

You can give those to yourself without eating anything.

I know it's kind of a different example but after I took my break from drinking for a year, going into the next year I gave myself permission to drink whatever I wanted.

And when I did, I chose to have a glass of wine on my birthday, then two beers a couple months later, and after that I had some tastes of drinks but didn't have a full drink for several months. Maybe even another year if I remember correctly, I don't really know.

And now, I give myself permission all the time without drinking anything. And there have been times when I've verbalized my permission to myself in my mind, and what I mean by that is before I'd go to wherever I was going, I'd actually tell myself, "Maybe I'll have a drink." I always had permission but sometimes I'd actually verbalize it in my head to myself. And then when I'd get there, I'd chose not to.

I didn't have to drink to make the permission real. I had it even without drinking. The permission was there and I chose to say no and I loved my reasons for saying no.

Had I drank it *could* have proven that I have permission but I don't need to drink to prove it.

Now, when you're making this transition with eating, you *can* eat the foods to prove that you have permission. It can be helpful when you're retraining your brain to be in a more abundant mindset and to understand that it's okay to eat these foods.

Most people find it helpful.

But just know that the real transformation happens when you deep in your bones believe that it's okay to eat them and that you can eat them whenever you want to.

The deprivation and feeling of being restricted comes from what you're thinking, not what you're doing.

Because again, not eating can feel good and not eating can feel bad based on how you're thinking about not eating.

So you have to work on believing that it's okay to eat foods that aren't nutritious, it's okay to eat when you're not hungry, it's okay to eat foods that are high in calories, fat, carbs or whatever.

It's okay to eat foods you like simply because you will experience pleasure when you do.

And it's also important to know that the permission you give yourself doesn't expire. It's always there.

So you're giving yourself permission today and tomorrow and every day after that. Not just for today.

Tomorrow, if it's still an option, you can decide if you want to eat it or not. The choice will be yours because you can. And the same goes for the future. This isn't the last time you're allowed. You're always allowed.

Doing the work to stop mentally restricting isn't just about what you're eating, it's mostly about what you're mentally allowing.

It's not going to be helpful if you eat the foods and keep telling yourself you shouldn't be.

It's not going to be helpful if you're eating the foods and thinking they're bad, or that what you're doing is bad.

And it's not going to be helpful if you're eating the food but are telling yourself that you can't eat it again for awhile.

Yes you're eating the food but your mindset is still restrictive and that's what you need to get away from.

So eat what you want, allow yourself to eat the food, but also make sure you're giving yourself full permission to make the choice.

You have permission regardless. If the food is in your home, is at an event you're at, is available at a nearby store or restaurant, you can get it. Now you have to mentally give yourself the permission that you already have.

You will feel so much better when you align your beliefs with what's really true.

And what's true is that you have permission.

Now allow yourself to have it in your mind.

Recognize and receive the freedom that you already have.

Then there will be no more mental food deprivation and any of your urges to binge that originate from that kind of restriction will no longer exist.

Now, before I go, I do know that it can be scary to let go of your restrictions and it can be a challenge to change your thought patterns and mindset and this is why I offer my help with this inside of The Stop Binge Eating Program.

So come join me in there if you want help with it. I help people overcome their overly restrictive thoughts and behaviors in every group I run and you could be one of those people who does it and who gets to feel good about what they eat and don't eat.

So if you want to get my help, go to [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group) to register before registration closes this Thursday November 16<sup>th</sup> of 2023. And email any questions you have that aren't answered on that page to [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com).

I'm so excited to end the year and start the new year, making progress all along the way, with this group. Come be a part of it.

Alright, I'll talk to you soon, bye bye.

