

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #282: How to Be More Disciplined

Hello! Before we get started, I wanted to let you know that registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program will be opening up in one month, on January 25th of 2024.

2024 can be your year. It can be different than the others because you will do different things that you haven't done before or do things in a different way. This program, and all the things we'll do in it together can be the different things you do. I've seen so many people worry about it not working for them and worrying that they'll just fall back into old habits but they don't because they're truly changing their habits and changing themselves, which is something they haven't actually done before.

We change their relationship with food, with themselves, with binge eating, with emotions, with their bodies, so many things. And we do it together, as a team.

So let's you and I kick binge eating in the butt together, as a team. If you haven't been making the progress you want to be making, I will help you. You don't have to do this alone and doing it as a team will make it so much easier.

Now, I've made a few changes, as I sometimes do in order to continue to make the program the best it can be, and you can get all the most up to date info, including the pricing and program details by going to coachkir.com/group and you can also join the waitlist while you're there so you can get notified once registration opens and you can get started on the coursework ASAP once it does.

And if you have any questions, email them to info@coachkir.com.

Alright, and now let's talk about being more disciplined.

It's something so many people want. They want to be more disciplined so they can do more of the things they want to be doing that they think will better themselves and their lives.

And in order to be more disciplined, one has to be willing to give up immediate pleasure and comfort for what they want the most and for what will create the most comfort and pleasure.

Usually we have these goals for ourselves because we believe that we will experience more pleasure and comfort if we achieve them.

But when we're not disciplined, and instead of working toward those goals, we choose easy, familiar, comfortable things instead, we do experience pleasure and comfort but it's at the expense of what would be the most pleasurable and comfortable.

Because usually, those goals we set are things that will have lasting effects on us while those things we procrastinate with don't. Not always, but that's usually the case and that's why people get so frustrated with themselves when they're not disciplined.

They know the result of being disciplined would be better than the result of doing that easy, pleasurable thing that they're comfortable with doing.

So if you're one of those people who considers themselves to not be disciplined, how do you become more disciplined?

Well first, you have to know why you're lacking it.

I could just give you some tips for how you could be more disciplined but it's going to be much more effective if you know which would be the most beneficial for you to focus on.

And you'll know what that is when you know what the root cause of your lack of discipline is.

It's just like when I'm coaching my group members on anything binge eating related. Before we get into how they can do something they want to do, or not do something they don't want to do, we have to first know why they're doing or not doing what they're currently doing or not doing. When we know the root cause, we can work on a relevant solution instead of spending too much time and energy on trying every solution.

So why do you think *you* are lacking discipline?

And you're not going to answer that question by saying something negative about yourself.

You're not going to say it's because you're weak, you're a failure, you're a loser, you're a screw up, you can't do anything right, or anything like that.

You're also not going to use your past against you and say that you've just never been a disciplined person.

You're going to figure out *why* you haven't been disciplined.

It's not that there's something wrong with you, it's that there's a mental obstacle in your way that you need to uncover and overcome.

Now, the main obstacle that gets in all of our ways is simply the motivational triad that all of us humans experience.

We have this innate desire to seek pleasure, avoid pain, and do what's easiest to conserve energy.

When you're not being disciplined, you are doing exactly that.

Doing new things and achieving goals and doing things that don't give you immediate gratification might be a little, or a lot painful, and might not be pleasurable in the moment, and might use a lot of energy and effort and we innately don't want to do that.

So basically, the main difference between people who are disciplined and people who aren't is that people who are do more things they don't feel like doing.

They go against that humanly desire to do the easy, pleasurable thing and they do the more painful thing, and by painful I really mean uncomfortable, that uses more energy and effort.

That's the basics of it but that still doesn't answer why some people are more skilled at doing this than other people.

Now, is it a genetic thing? Are some people just born with a better ability to do this?

Some people say yes, some say no.

And also, environmental factors growing up, and the people you've been surrounded by in your life could have an effect.

But even if being disciplined has come easier for some people for whatever reason, that doesn't mean that *you* can't become more disciplined.

You can get to the bottom of why you haven't been either in one area or many areas of your life and work on it to become better.

So let's dig a little deeper and look at the main reasons why people aren't disciplined and you're going to look for which apply to you.

The first one is that you don't have a compelling enough reason to do what you want to be disciplined in.

Your reason for doing the thing you want to do isn't a good enough reason.

Now, this could be for one of two reasons.

One, you simply don't want it bad enough, meaning that your reason isn't compelling or important enough for you to go through discomfort and put in energy and effort. Your reason for doing the thing isn't as good as your reason for not doing the thing.

For example, say you want to be more disciplined about doing chores around the house when you get home from work, before you relax. But, you also have this strong desire to relax as soon as you get home because you've been so busy with work all day.

Is your reason for doing chores before relaxing important enough for you to feel uncomfortable and use your energy for it?

Maybe it's not, because you will have time to do it after relaxing and really, it will be fine if you do it in 30 minutes or in an hour instead.

And honestly, maybe it would be better for you if you did relax first, if you did give yourself a break between job work and home work.

So maybe you're having such a hard time being disciplined with the home chores right after work because it's not important enough that you do it then and it might be better for you if you don't.

Now, there of course then comes the reasoning that if you do relax first then it's not going to get done, even though there is time for it.

But, of course it can get done, if you work on the things I'm talking about in this episode.

And if you have an important reason to get the things done, it will make it easier for you to do the uncomfortable thing and get them done. Compelling reasons are part of what gives us the motivation we need to be disciplined.

Now, going back to what I was saying before, sometimes your reason isn't compelling enough but also, sometimes, it might seem like you don't have a reason that's compelling enough but really, you're just not digging into your reason enough.

Yes, you want to have the chores done, yes you want to have a clean and organized home, but why?

And when you answer that question, ask yourself, "why" again. Ask yourself why until you get to a reason that is specific and personal and it is something meaningful for you. It has to greatly outweigh the reason for not doing the chores and when you just stay on the surface of just wanting a clean home and wanting things to be done, it's not going to be as strong of a motive than if you were telling yourself that you'll feel accomplished, that you'll feel lighter, you won't have to keep thinking about it, and you'll be able to enjoy your home and your free time more if you do it.

To me, that reason hits so much more and I'm more likely to do it if I'm thinking about that deeper reason.

And it's the same thing when you want to stop binge eating.

In order to do the work you'll need to do, you'll need to have discipline and do the work even when you don't feel like it.

And by the work I mean things like taking the time to think through your eating decisions, feeling through your emotions and urges, managing your thoughts around food, being intentionally kind to your body, being intentionally kind to yourself, things like that.

When you get specific and personal about why you want to do these things to stop binge eating and have reasons that are meaningful to you, it'll be so much easier for you to do the things, even when you don't feel like it.

So, one reason why you might not be disciplined with what you want to be disciplined in, could be that your reason to do it isn't compelling enough.

Or, maybe it is but you're just not telling it to yourself in the moment when you need to hear it.

It's not enough to just have a compelling reason, you also have to tell it to yourself when you are wanting to not do the thing.

You have to give yourself the motive, the reason to put in energy and do the uncomfortable thing when you also have an option for an easy, pleasurable thing.

You have to tell yourself why you're going to wait for the delayed gratification.

Okay, so that's one reason why you might not be disciplined.

A second reason is that you're too hard on yourself when you don't do what you want to do.

If you want to build the skill of being disciplined, you have to be consistent and when you're hard on yourself, you're creating an obstacle that is making it hard for you to be consistent.

Now, when I'm talking about being consistent, I'm not saying you have to be doing it 100% of the time. How it's actually going to work for most people is that in the beginning they might actually only be following through on doing it 20% of the time. But over time, they do it more and more, and still most people aren't doing things 100% of the time because we're not perfect.

And in the beginning, if you're too hard on yourself when you don't follow through, you're not going to feel encouraged to keep going. So you're likely to give up and have a little quit for the day, or for a few days, or have a big quit and just stop trying forever or for awhile.

If you're going to build the skill of being disciplined, you need to be compassionate and encouraging with yourself when you don't follow through.

You're doing something that isn't easy, because it's new and uncomfortable, have compassion.

And be encouraging because you *can* do it. Just because you haven't done it, or haven't been consistent, doesn't mean you can't.

You can, you just need to get out of your own way, which you're learning how to do.

And what could be in your way is your negative self-talk. You don't have to speak to yourself in such a harsh way. It's not useful and not required.

So be compassionate and encouraging instead.

Next, a third reason why you might not be disciplined is that you're afraid to fail so you don't even try. When it comes time to put in the effort to be disciplined, you don't do it because you think you'll fail.

But here's the thing. If you don't even try, then you're failing at achieving your goal. You're living in the failure now, by choice.

But if you do try, you're giving yourself the opportunity to succeed. Sure there's the risk of failing but there's also the possibility of success.

And here's the other thing about failing. The only reason why failing would be scary is because of what you would make it mean about you, and that's optional.

You don't have to make failing mean that you are a failure, or that you can't ever do it, or that you're broken and can't change.

The worst part about failing is the words you tell yourself about yourself when it happens, and how that makes you feel.

And you don't have to make it mean any of that.

You can simply see the fail as an opportunity to learn something, as information about what obstacle is in your way or about what you need to do differently.

If you try and fail, you're going to learn something. If you don't try at all, you'll learn nothing.

Failing doesn't mean you aren't capable, it just means you haven't figured it out yet and failing can actually help you figure it out. It can highlight a lesson that you need to learn.

And eventually, when you learn the lessons you need to learn and you implement strategies that address those lessons and that overcome the obstacle that you uncovered through that fail, you you will figure it out.

You don't have to be afraid of failing. Be afraid of not trying and what will happen if you don't try. Also know that whatever feelings you'll feel if you fail are temporary and they will pass and you will only feel as bad as you speak, meaning that your self-talk will determine how you emotionally feel if you fail, which will also influence what you do after you fail, whether you give up or keep going.

And one more thing about failing as you're working toward a goal. You might fail as you go through the process of achieving the goal, because you're not going to be perfectly consistent, but you're not going to fail entirely because you're never going to give up if it's important enough to you.

I've had so many people who've joined my program after tons of fails and they joined because stopping binge eating was way too important to them to quit trying.

You can stop binge eating and it's so important that you do. So you're going to keep going, even when you have those fails along the way.

And now, the fourth reason.

You're unwilling to experience discomfort.

This is the one I see the most. This is the one that stops the most people most of the time.

Doing new things can be uncomfortable. Doing things you don't feel like doing is uncomfortable.

Most of the time, people don't enjoy feeling uncomfortable. We'd much prefer comfort.

But people who are disciplined are willing to feel discomfort because they know it will bring greater comfort for them if they do.

Some even seek out discomfort because of their desire to grow and become better.

If you want change in yourself and in your life, you have to do different things, things outside of your comfort zone, things that aren't familiar, things that aren't easy, things that take effort, things that aren't habits, things that are going to require energy.

So you can't keep not doing things because you don't feel like it or because it's going to be uncomfortable.

And feeling discomfort in itself is a skill that I believe not enough people work on building.

Instead, so many people just avoid it, procrastinate feeling it by doing comfortable things, and then feel uncomfortable due to their lack of discipline.

Be a person who builds the skill of feeling discomfort.

Become a person who is comfortable feeling discomfort.

And you're going to do that by feeling just a little at a time.

You don't need to jump into hugely uncomfortable tasks and situations, start small.

And that goes for anything you're trying to be disciplined with, which brings us to the fifth reason.

Trying to do too much.

I get that you might want to change many things in yourself and in your life. I get that you might want to be more disciplined with many things that you aren't.

But don't try to work on them all at once. You'll get burnt out or you just won't have the mental capacity or energy for them all and you'll end up not being consistent with any of them.

You're so much better off starting small, with one doable thing.

And you can even break down the small thing into something seemingly trivial and insignificant, which will actually be what starts your process of doing the thing you want to be disciplined with.

For example, say you want to be more disciplined with meal prep.

Instead of committing to prepping all of your meals ahead of time, if that seems too daunting, go smaller. Does it seem more doable for you to just prep your lunches for the week? Or what if you went even smaller and prepped only one singular meal?

You could start with just one, which might seem like it won't make a difference but it will because you're going to show yourself that you are capable of prepping a meal. Then, when you become more disciplined with that one meal, you can add another when you feel ready. Over time, you can add more and it will all lead you to where you ultimately want to be, one small step, one smaller bit of discomfort at a time.

Another example, say you want to be more disciplined about doing morning workouts.

Instead of committing to an hour a day, go smaller. Does 30 minutes feel doable? What about 5 minutes?

What about just putting on your workout clothes?

You could just start with committing to putting on your workout clothes 3 mornings a week. You don't even have to work out. Just work through the small discomfort of putting on the clothes and remember what the purpose of this is, it's to move you toward a bigger goal that you have important reasons to achieve. Get to that compelling reason.

You don't have to jump right into doing it all, and trying to be disciplined with these huge new routines or habits you want. Start with something super small and very doable that will only require you to experience a little discomfort and you get good at doing that before you move on to something a teeny tiny bit bigger.

And when it comes to working on stopping binge eating, instead of trying to do like 10 different things that you've learned on the podcast, pick one. Just pick one episode, one topic, that is only a little uncomfortable and work on being disciplined with that.

And remember, you don't have to be perfect and it's okay if you fail. You're going to keep going and manage your self-talk through the process.

So, to be more disciplined, here's what you're going to do, depending on what is it that has been stopping you from being more disciplined.

Make sure you have a compelling, important reason to do what it is that you want to be disciplined in.

Tell yourself that reason when you don't feel like doing it.

You're going to create motivation for yourself, and it may not be like, super good feeling motivation but you're going to give yourself a motive to push you to do what you don't feel like doing.

Be honest about how not being disciplined in this thing affects your life and how being disciplined in it will affect your life.

For me, I don't always want to do a workout before work but I know it will help me to feel better and have more energy which will help me to get more done and having more energy will make my free time more pleasurable instead of being drained of energy and not being able to enjoy it.

So I tell myself that when I don't feel like doing the workout.

I also do it when it comes time to make a grocery shopping list and figure out what meals I want to eat during the week. I don't enjoy doing that, most of the time I don't feel like it. But I do it anyway because I have reasons that are important to me to do it. And I think about those reasons when I feel resistance to doing it.

So make sure you have those important, compelling reasons for the things you're not going to feel like doing.

You're also going to be compassionate and encouraging with yourself when you aren't doing what you want to be doing so you lift yourself up and keep going so you can be as consistent as you can, even if it's not a lot in the beginning. You're going to use that fail as information and learn about your mental obstacles so you can do something different to help you overcome whatever the obstacle was.

And you're going to risk failure because it's the only way you'll give yourself the opportunity for success.

You're going to go through discomfort, starting with discomfort that's not that intense and you'll slowly increase your discomfort tolerance over time.

And you're going to start small with everything and only commit to what you think is doable.

And lastly, you're going to celebrate the crap out of yourself.

Every small win matters. Doing something one time is a win even if you also didn't do it three times.

Putting on your workout clothes is a win, even if you didn't work out. Prepping one meal is a win, even if every other meal was less than ideal. And doing one thing that could help you to stop binge eating is a win, even if you did other things that resulted in you bingeing. You'll get to those other things over time but for now, be proud of that one thing you did.

Celebrate the times you did what you set out to do.

It's so important because it will help to keep you moving, and build your confidence, and build your self-esteem, so don't be shy about it or think you're not worthy of it or think what you did isn't worthy of celebration.

It is, and you are worthy of celebration.

So do it.

And as you go, this will all become easier. You will get better at being disciplined. You will get more skilled at doing what it takes.

You'll get better at feeling discomfort, at doing what you don't feel like doing, and at speaking to yourself more kindly.

And you'll become a person who is more disciplined.

Alright, now get to work on it and I'll talk to you next time.

Bye bye.