THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #288: How to Not Give Up at the End of the Day

Hello! Let's talk about not giving up at the end of the day.

For so many of us, we feel really motivated at the start of the day.

We have our goals, we feel pumped up about them, we have belief in ourselves, we have a plan, and we're ready to go and get it done.

But as the day goes on, we lose our motivation, the excuses to not do what we planned begin to come up, we decide that it's okay if we don't do it today, or if we ease up, we care less, and we don't end up accomplishing what we had wanted to.

Maybe you have an eating plan for the day but as the day goes on, you veer from it more and more until you decide that it doesn't even matter anymore and you just eat whatever or you stick to it all day right until the end when you go completely off.

Maybe you're checking in with yourself and processing your emotions during the day but at the end of the day, you just go on autopilot, stop paying attention to yourself, and eat to relax and comfort yourself and to get some pleasure.

Maybe you're catching yourself thinking negatively about yourself or your body throughout the day and you're replacing those thoughts with more useful thoughts but at the end of the day, you stop managing your thoughts, you let the negative stick around, and you then eat to try and feel better or because you've just given up on yourself.

There's so many ways this can show up but what it comes down to is that you start off doing well but at some point, you stop.

You start off your morning well rested, hopefully, so you're feeling awake and ready to take on the day. We've taken the night to reset. It's also a fresh start and I know how much most of us like a fresh start, that's one reason why we tend to say we'll work on it tomorrow, because tomorrow will be a fresh start.

So we have an optimistic attitude as we start our day. We tell ourselves we can do it and we are accessing the reasons why we believe we can do it.

We have a fresh day ahead and are thinking that we can do this.

Because of the attitude we have in the morning, we're making it easier for us to do the things we've set out to do.

The more positive your thoughts are, the easier it is to do positive things for yourself.

Positive thoughts will create positive emotions which will drive positive actions.

So basically, your thoughts are more positive in the morning, and your outlook is more positive, but also, you're most likely feeling more awake and rested.

And then, as the day goes on, challenges arise.

Our emotions are shifting, our thoughts are shifting, we're presented with circumstances that we didn't prepare for, our energy levels decrease, so basically, things change internally for us.

And as we are faced with these challenges during our day, if we don't have a super compelling reason to keep doing the work that we promised ourselves we would do, then we're going to just succumb to what our human brain wants us to do – which is to get away from what's hard and uncomfortable and do what's easy and pleasurable.

And working toward your goal is going to fall into the former.

It just goes along with the territory of goals. Achieving a goal, especially doing what you're going to do to stop binge eating, is going to require energy and effort, which is going to be harder than not putting in energy and effort.

And, even if your goal is to do more of something that's pleasurable, if you're not in the habit, then it will require energy and effort to do that thing rather than what you've habitually been doing and that will make it uncomfortable at first.

New things will be more uncomfortable and will be harder to do than the things you've been habitually doing and things that are familiar.

And any time you're going to do something that keeps you in discomfort and using energy, again, you're going to need a reason that is really important to you to do it.

This is why having a compelling reason to stop binge eating, and to do the work to stop binge eating, is imperative and is part of the foundation of this work.

It's one of the first things you need to get really clear on because without it, it's too easy to do what's easy, which is to not do the work and not work toward the goal.

When it gets hard, when you don't feel like it anymore, when you're not feeling the same emotions you were feeling at the start of the day or aren't thinking the same way you were, when life throws you a curveball, when you're not as energized as you were, you have to have a compelling, important reason to use the energy you do have to do what you committed to doing.

So that's going to be the most important thing you need to do in order to not give up at the end of the day. You need to have this reason and not just have it but, tell it to yourself anytime you want to quit.

But along with that, it will be helpful to do some other things to help stop you from quitting.

That compelling reason isn't always enough, especially when the urge to binge has gotten strong or when you've gotten far from where you were internally at the start of the day.

When you've gotten to that place where you just do not care, there's not much you can do.

If you don't care, you're not then going to go and work on yourself. You don't care about working on yourself.

So you need to do what you can to prevent yourself from getting to the place where you've decided you no longer care.

And I'm going to give you several things you can do to help you do that.

One, you can help yourself to avoid decision fatigue.

We're making countless decisions throughout our day, and not just with our eating like what we're going to eat, when we're going to eat, how much we're going to eat, and all that but with everything in our lives with our jobs, our free time, our relationships, friendships, and families, our chores and errands, just everything.

And every decision is going to use up energy. And the more time we spend on going back and worth with a decision and being in indecision the more energy we're going to use. And it can also bring up uncomfortable emotions.

And if you're making a ton of decisions and depleting your energy, then at the end of the day, you might just decide to be done with decision making, done with using energy, and that includes deciding to stick to your goals and plans and using energy for that.

So if this is something you see happen to yourself, what can help you is to make as many decisions ahead of time that you can.

Instead of making all your eating decisions in the moment, you can make a lot of them in the morning, the night before, or you can even make decisions for the week and you're doing it at a time when you *do* have the energy and are emotionally feeling good. When you're making decisions while feeling emotionally good and when you have energy, you're likely going to use less energy than when you're trying to make them when you're feeling negatively and have less energy, mostly because accessing the

decision making part of your brain will be more challenging when you're tired and feeling negatively and you're also more likely to get stuck in indecision because of that.

So do yourself a favor and make as many decisions ahead of time as you can so you have more energy to make the ones you can't make ahead of time. Help yourself conserve your energy.

Another thing you can do to help yourself to not give up at the end of the day is to make the end of your day as easy and realistic as you can.

When we're making goals and plans, sometimes we get a little too excited, a little too over ambitious, and we come up with these great ideas that are just not realistic given how we usually feel toward the end of the day, the things we're already committed to at the end of the day, and how much time we have.

So when you're making plans or setting goals, check them to make sure it's realistic for you to actually get them done. Make sure they're doable and not overly ambitious. Set yourself up to succeed.

So that may mean instead of doing 5 things you want to do, your goal is to do one.

Or instead of setting out to work on a big project at the end of the day, plan to do just one small part of it.

Make it easy for yourself to do.

Another thing is for you to take moments throughout the day to recenter yourself.

This is something I talked about more in depth in episode #240: Resetting and Centering Yourself.

But basically, it's taking small moments throughout the day for yourself. It doesn't have to be a ton of time either, any time you can give to yourself is better than no time.

And you're just taking a moment to check in with yourself, to acknowledge how you're feeling, to take deep breaths, to calm your nervous system as much as you can, to just focus on you and give yourself attention.

And if you can fully work through something in that time, awesome. If you can journal your thoughts and get to a better place, great.

But if not, just getting as far as you can will help more than doing nothing at all.

The goal is to get yourself as close as you can back to that centered place you experienced in the morning.

And similar to that is the next one.

Handle your emotions when they come up or as soon as you can.

When you notice you're getting emotional or worked up, don't ignore it. Acknowledge it.

If right then you can work through it, great.

But if you can't, make sure you do it as soon as you can.

For example, I've had times when I've experienced emotions and then have to coach on a group call in one of my Stop Binge Eating Groups. It's okay for me to put aside my emotions so I can show up for my group members on that call but afterward, I work on my emotion. I'll acknowledge it, accept it, and feel it. And I'll do my best to work on whatever thoughts created it.

And watch out for excuses like, "I don't have time" when you really do. If you have time to eat a snack, you have time to breathe through a feeling and work on processing through it.

You can take 30 seconds at some point, and you'll do it because you have that compelling reason I talked about before. If you take these 30 seconds or more to do this now, it will help you to do the things you really want to do at the end of the day instead of giving up because you let your emotions drain your energy because you didn't take the time to handle them when they first came up.

Acknowledge and breathe through your emotions as soon as you can and do it intermittently when you can until you finally see they've passed.

Avoid the build up, not the emotion.

Another thing you can do to help you not give up at the end of the day is to let go of your all or nothing thinking.

That's another thing that causes build up.

You let one mistake turn into another and turn into another.

Once one mistake happens, you decide to open the door for more instead of closing the door on that mistake and getting back to how you really want to be.

Just because you ate one thing off your plan or overate at lunch doesn't mean you have to give up on the rest of your day.

You can turn it around immediately and decide that you haven't ruined anything or screwed anything up.

Because you really haven't.

You can still have a good day even if the day included mistakes and slip ups.

Your day doesn't have to be perfect and a lot of the time it's not going to be.

And that's okay.

And the last one I want to share with you is to plan for pleasure that's not food for the end of the day.

Pleasure is most likely what you'll want the most at the end of the day, especially if your day was busy, productive, emotional, or tiring.

That's one reason why people overeat at the end of the day.

They just want to enjoy themselves and feel good.

So if that's what you want, plan for something enjoyable that's not eating food.

And it doesn't have to be super exciting, or a 10 out of 10 pleasure.

It can be a chill 5 out of 10, something enjoyable and relaxing, and when you finish it you're not going to feel worse than you did before you started.

Don't set yourself up to be bored or lost without any idea of what to do at the end of the day.

Do that and your brain will offer eating food, especially if that's what you usually do.

Plan for something and make sure you have a compelling reason to do that thing so you'll feel more driven to do it, even if it will take a little extra effort to do it.

So those are some things you can do to help you to not give up at the end of the day.

You don't have to go completely off track.

You don't have to lose sight of what you really want and give up on achieving what you want to achieve.

You absolutely can.

Make it happen today, and then work on it tomorrow, and every day after that.

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