

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #290: Asking for What You Want

Hello! What do you want that you aren't asking for?

What do you often want that you don't ask for?

That's what I'm talking about today, asking for what you want.

Asking for what you want for food, asking for what you want that will help you, pretty much asking for anything that you want no matter what it is that you want.

So many of us don't do it, and then when we don't get what we want, we're upset, disappointed, resentful, or unsatisfied.

And sometimes, especially if it has something to do with food, it can result in a binge.

There's a few reasons why this can happen and I want to talk about them with you today so that not getting what you want isn't going to lead you into a binge.

So, in what ways might you not be asking for what you want?

Maybe you're not asking for modifications at restaurants, so instead you're not getting your meal in the way you want or you're choosing something else you don't want as much because you're afraid to ask for modifications.

Maybe you're going along with what other people are choosing for restaurants or for a family style meal when it's not really what you want because you don't want to be a burden or to be difficult.

Maybe someone keeps bringing you food and you're not asking them to stop, even though you really want them to stop.

Or someone is pushing food on you and you're not asking them to stop.

Maybe you're not asking for what you want because you think you should want something else or not even that you should want something else but that you shouldn't have what you want because it's not healthy.

Maybe you're wanting support in a certain way as you work on stopping binge eating and you're not asking for it.

Or in relationships, friendships, you're not asking for what you want and you don't get it.

There's so many examples of how this can show up and this can be a problem because a lot of the time if you don't ask for what you want, you're not going to get it.

We can't just expect things to always be how we want them or for other people to give us what we want without us asking.

And what we want is important because if we don't get what we want, and it's important to us, then again we might feel upset, disappointed, resentful, or unsatisfied and might then go and eat food to feel better.

Now, there's two things I want to say before I go on.

One, it doesn't have to be this way. You *can* feel those feelings and not eat. You *can* process your feelings, experience them, and allow yourself to feel them without eating.

But in this episode, I'm not going into depth about doing that. That's for another episode and I've talked about it in many others.

This one is about how you can feel those feelings less by asking for what you want. I'm going to help you to ask for what you want.

Now, that doesn't mean you're always going to get what you want.

That's the second thing I wanted to say.

This isn't about getting everything you want.

This is about you communicating your wants which will give you a better chance of actually getting what you want and feeling satisfied and content and joyful.

It's not guaranteed you'll get what you want, and I'll talk about handling not getting what you want later on but, you'll have a better chance of getting what you want when you ask for it than when you don't.

So, let's look at those common examples I went through a moment ago and take a deeper dive into each.

First, not asking for modifications at restaurants and getting what you really want how you want it.

When you don't, you might be disappointed by your meal and feel dissatisfied and then afterward, go home and eat something really pleasurable to try and get your pleasure fix that you didn't get from your meal.

Now, if that sounds like something you do, you might want to check out an episode I did not long ago, #199 called, "When Your Food is Disappointing."

Disappointing food happens to all of us sometimes and it doesn't have to turn into a binge.

But also, sometimes, if you ask for what you want, then you end up being more satisfied than you would have been had you not.

So why aren't you asking for what you want in this situation and asking for modifications?

Most likely, you just don't want to be difficult. You don't want the server to see you as difficult, you don't want the people you're eating with to see you as difficult.

So instead of coming off as difficult, you get something you don't really want or don't get it in the way you want.

But here's the thing.

You might not be being as difficult as you think you're being.

I worked in restaurants for many years as a server and I've had countless people ask for modifications and probably about 95% of the time it's not at all difficult.

Most of the time, what you're asking for is going to be easy for the server to do.

They'll just have to hit a few extra buttons on the computer, maybe type in a word or two, but it's not a big deal.

It's usually not as big of a deal as you think it is.

Do you want a different side? Do you want no mushrooms? Do you want a different dressing or sauce? Ask for it, you probably can and it's not a big deal.

Now, sometimes the answer might be no, and again I'll talk about that at the end but, the answer might also be an easy yes.

See if it's a yes.

And as for the other people with you, yeah, maybe they will think you're being difficult but also, maybe they won't.

I went out to eat with a friend recently who asked a few questions and made a few modifications and they weren't super common ones like asking if there's tomatoes in the salad or for a side salad instead of fries.

And I wasn't thinking she was being difficult.

I was thinking she knows what she wants and she's asking for it.

She's my friend and I know she's particular about what she eats for certain health reasons and I think it's great she's willing to ask for what's important to her.

So people might not be thinking what you think they're thinking.

So don't hold yourself back from asking for what you want in a situation like this because it's very likely that there isn't going to be the kind of judgement that you think there will be.

But even if there is, if they do think you're being difficult, how long are they really thinking about it for? A few seconds right after you order? That's most likely. They're unlikely going to be thinking about it for the next hour or longer.

And even if they do, that's on them, not you. You can let them judge, let them think you're being difficult, and you can feel good about your quote "difficult" order and love the way your meal is being prepared knowing you're a person who asks for what they want.

You can be solid in your decisions and feel good about it, knowing that you're not setting yourself up for disappointment and dissatisfaction that could put you on the path toward a binge.

Now the next one, not asking to eat food you want or go to restaurants you want to go to and you instead just go along with what other people want.

This can be very similar to the previous one with the emotions you might feel afterward and the reasons why you do it.

Again, you don't want to be difficult.

You might also worry about creating an argument.

But just like with the other example about modifications, you don't actually know how they're going to respond.

Just last weekend friends I were making plans for Friday night and the person hosting suggested getting pizza like we did the last time we all hung out.

Now, part of me considered just saying yes, even though that was not what I wanted. I thought it would just be easier if I said yes, the decision would be made and we'd be done with it, assuming that the other two were also on board, I was also afraid that I would then be put on the spot to offer another suggestion, and I didn't know what to say.

But I didn't do what I thought was the easier thing. I ask for what I wanted, which was to not have pizza.

I was going to be eating pizza the next night at my nephew's birthday party and I didn't want to have pizza two nights in a row. So I explained that, and I also said that if everyone else wants pizza then I can just do my own thing.

I shared my want, and I'm so glad I did, because I wouldn't have been happy with eating pizza two night in a row.

And no one shared any judgements about my decision.

Did they have any? I mean, it's unlikely knowing all the people involved. But regardless, I was happy with my decision and that's what matters the most for me.

You can ask for what you want and the other people might have no problem with it.

I know for me, there's been times when I've suggested eating a certain food or at a certain place and someone tells me they want something else and it's totally fine because I wasn't super attached to my suggestion.

It wasn't an issue at all.

And I didn't think they were being difficult, just asking for what they want.

So again, instead of assuming what people will think of your want, share it.

You might be surprised by what they say.

Now the next one, when you don't ask someone to stop bringing you food or stop pushing food on you.

You might not do it because you don't want to hurt their feelings.

But like with the other examples, you might not be hurting their feelings. They might just say okay and stop.

But also, you might.

And if they do feel a negative emotion when you ask them to stop, it's okay.

It's okay if they feel a feeling, just like it's okay if you feel a feeling too.

It's okay to feel feelings.

Of course we don't want to influence any other people to feel negative emotions but sometimes it's going to happen when we ask for what we want.

And you have the choice of either not getting what you want, and feeling resentful, upset, or angry or asking for what you want so you can more easily feel good while the other person might feel a negative emotion or might not.

That last part is key here because them feeling a negative emotion isn't guaranteed.

They might not even know that it bothers you and might like to know that it does.

Or they might not really care about you eating the food at all, they were just trying to share pleasure and it's not a big deal to them.

And you can ask them to stop nicely, and you can explain why if you want to.

But most importantly, you're sharing a want of yours with this person and if you want to grow a connection and relationship with a person, sharing is just going to help.

There might be a negative emotion at first but then there can be growth.

And just to be clear, this isn't about your emotions being more important than theirs. It's not you choosing to make yourself feel good and make them feel bad.

Again, we don't even know if they'll feel bad.

But if they do, you can simultaneously care about their emotions and choose to take care of yourself.

So if you want someone to stop, ask them to stop.

And make it clear.

I was coaching someone one time about their mom pushing food on them and they kept saying things like, "not right now," "maybe later," or "I'm just gonna have some of this."

They weren't clearly asking them to stop and therefore, her mom didn't get the message that she wanted her to stop.

Just a simple, "please stop asking me," or "please don't bring me food anymore," can end it once and for all.

And you can phrase it differently, whatever feels good to you.

But when you're making your request and asking for what you want, be as clear as you can about what you want so the person can actually fulfill your request if they want to.

Now, these have all been about other people but, what about with yourself?

What about when you're not asking for what you want because you're judging yourself?

You think that what you want isn't healthy enough or isn't something you should want.

But really, what you want is what you want.

It is something you want because you want it, and it tastes good to you or sounds good to you.

And it's okay if you want foods that aren't the most nutritious.

You're not wrong for eating foods that aren't nutrient dense.

You're a human who enjoys yummy food.

And sometimes, yummy food isn't the most nutritious and it's okay.

You're still allowed to eat it.

And you're allowed to want it.

So ask for what you want, even if it's not the most nutritious option.

And the last one I want to talk about is when you're not asking for what you want in your relationships, whatever kind it is, romantic, friendships, family, whatever.

You might be wanting support in a certain way or wanting help in a certain way but you're not asking for it because you don't want to be a burden or are afraid of how they'll respond.

So you don't, and you don't get what you want because that other person doesn't even know that you want it.

So often, we just wait for people to do things for us or we think they should just know to do it.

But they don't.

They don't know to do it because you haven't communicated with them that you want it.

If they aren't doing what you want, tell them.

They might be grateful that you expressed your want to them.

They might actually do it now that you've told them you want them to do it.

And if they are someone who cares about you, they might really want to do it.

Sometimes we think we're being a burden but we're not if the person actually wants to do what we're asking.

They're happy to help, they want to help, they might actually feel good helping you.

Don't you feel good helping people when you genuinely want to help them?

I know I do. I wouldn't be a coach if I didn't.

So let people help you.

Ask for their help.

Ask for support and communicate what supports looks like for you.

Ask for what you want.

Now, with all of that being said, yes, asking for what you want can help you to get what you want.

But as I said before, it's not guaranteed.

People might say no.

They might tell you that you can't modify your food that way, that they don't want to change their mind about where or what you're going to eat, they are going to bring you food anyway, or they don't want to help you or support you how you want to be supported.

And knowing there is a risk of this might stop you from doing it.

But do you know why it stops you?

The simple answer is that you think you'll feel bad if they say no.

You'll feel dejected, disappointed, sad, embarrassed, a feeling like that.

Not only are you risking them saying no, you're also risking feeling an uncomfortable feeling.

So instead of asking for what you want and possibly feeling uncomfortable if they say no, you're choosing to feel uncomfortable not asking for and not getting what you want.

The thing is, you're more likely to feel uncomfortable when you don't ask for what you want than if you do.

Kinda like how people are more likely to oblige when you ask for what you want than to shut you down or judge you, if your request is reasonable of course, and if you're talking about any of the examples I talked about today then I'd say they are reasonable.

But if you do feel that uncomfortable emotion, here's how you can help yourself to handle it.

One, you can allow yourself to feel uncomfortable for a moment.

You will be okay.

And two, you can be proud of yourself for asking for what you wanted.



Even though you didn't get what you wanted, at least you asked instead of holding yourself back and not sharing.

At least you gave yourself the chance to get what you wanted.

At least you tried.

And the discomfort you feel after receiving the no doesn't have to last a long time.

You can be proud of yourself for asking, while feeling disappointed or sad, and you can then decide what you will do next.

And what you then tell yourself is going to matter, big time.

If you start being hard on yourself for asking, if you complain to yourself about the other person, if you start calling yourself an idiot or stupid, or if you keep telling yourself you shouldn't have done it and fill yourself with regret, you're going to create so much discomfort for yourself.

And I probably don't have to tell you how that could lead you into a binge.

So be kind to yourself.

You asked because you were trying to get what you want. You were expressing your wants. You were communicating.

And the other person is allowed to say no.

And now you're allowed to make a decision from here.

You can keep your thoughts neutral when you're told no and when you do, you're not going to spiral into an uncomfortable hole.

You will stay in a place where yes it might still be uncomfortable but it's going to be a lot easier to allow that discomfort from up here, out of that hole.

Accept their answer, accept the feelings you feel, and accept the new decision you're going to make about where you're going to go from here.

Alright, so, you might not ask for what you want because you don't want to hurt someone's feelings, or be a bother, or be a burden, or you don't want to be high maintenance, or you think you shouldn't have to, or are afraid to be told no.

But it's okay if other people feel feelings, and you might not be a bother or a burden at all, and you might not be difficult or high-maintenance at all, and yes, maybe you do have to express your wants because the person might not even know you want it, and if you're told no, you will be okay.

You'll feel the feelings you feel and make a new decision about what you want now that what you initially wanted is no longer an option.

And you can decide to love the new option, or at least like it instead of resenting it because it's not the original want.

So ask the questions, make the requests, risk being told no.

And give yourself the best chance for getting exactly what you want.

Alright, that's all for today, bye bye.