

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #293: How Your Binges Can Help You

Hello! Today I'm talking about how your binges can help you.

Most of the time when people binge they want to forget about it as soon as possible.

They want to forget that it ever happened and it put out of their mind.

And I get it. When you do something like binge eating, it's not something you want to keep thinking about and keep reminding yourself that you did.

But it's also not something that should be moved on from without taking something useful from it.

And there is so much that can be taken away from a binge that is going to help you in the future.

Every single binge that you have is going to highlight something that you need to work on, something that needs to change, something that needs more focus from you, or something that you need help with.

If you just forget about the binge and move on, there is a strong likelihood that you will have the exact same experience again.

Whatever it was that drove you to binge this time, whatever decisions you made before you binged, they will likely happen again.

You'll just keep repeating the same patterns over and over because you didn't take the time to uncover the patterns, understand the patterns, and strategize for how you'll create new patterns and not keep following the same ones you have been.

If you're going to change what's been happening, you have to take the time to look at what's been happening and why it's been happening.

So take the time to look at your binge. Look at what was going on before it happened, what you had been thinking, what you had been feeling and if you don't remember a lot, whatever you *can* remember will be helpful.

Even if you only remember one thing, that's one thing that you can work with.

That's one thing that you can gain understanding of, strategize for in the future, and look out for in the future.

For example, say that all you can remember is that it happened after dinner. You don't remember how you were feeling or what you were thinking. But you know when it happened.

Also, you know that this is a pattern for you. You quite often binge after dinner,

So now that you've uncovered this, you're going to work on understanding it. Why do you think this is a time when you binge? I bet you can find at least one reason why it is for you.

Let's say it's because you usually just want to relax and you have a habit of eating to relax.

So now you know that you're looking for relaxation. You have more understanding of what's going on.

Then you can strategize for how you want to relax if you're not going to eat food. You can come up with a plan of action.

As dinner approaches, and after dinner, then you can prepare for your new plan of action and get yourself ready to implement it.

Because you've taken the time to learn from your binge and think about what happened and think about how you can do differently in the future, you've come up with a new strategy.

You actually have a plan for something to do that will address what's caused you to binge in the past.

You're not just going to fall into the same patterns, you're actively going to try and change them by doing something different that will address a cause of your binges.

Now, here's something you need to know.

The plan and strategy that you came up with might not prevent you from bingeing after dinner the next time you eat dinner.

And that's okay!

Because if you do binge, you're just going to repeat the process.

You're going to take some time to look at what happened when you tried to implement your plan.

You're going to look back at what you were thinking, what you were feeling, what was going on, and the decisions you made.

And then you're going to tweak the plan and strategy that you came up with the last time. You're going to make it even better because now you have more information.

With each binge you're going to get more information.

But you won't get it if you don't look for it.

So if you binge, don't let it be a wasted opportunity.

Don't just call yourself a failure, beat yourself up about it, and then try to never think about it again.

And don't keep trying the same things over and over that aren't working.

I used to do that and it never helped.

So many times when I'd binge I'd make foods off limits if I binged on them or I'd change my calorie goal and those weren't going to make a difference because the food and the calorie goal weren't what were causing my binges.

Had I taken the time to break down what happened and understand it then I would have been more likely to come up with a strategy that would actually address the real cause of my binges.

Now, I didn't never do that. There were times that I did acknowledge that I was doing it because I was lonely or bored and was looking for something to do.

So I came up with the strategy of making plans and keeping myself busy.

But, what I didn't know was that that wasn't the full solution and wasn't something I'd be able to do all the time to prevent binges.

No matter how many plans I made, there were still going to be times when I felt lonely, or bored, or just simply didn't have plans. I couldn't avoid feeling those feelings 100% of the time and I actually didn't want every second of my life to be 100% planned out. So there would be times when I'd have free time without a plan.

And where my mistake was made was that I didn't come up with strategies for when I felt those feelings, realistic strategies for how I could handle them, and for when I was kind of lost without anything I wanted to do with my time.

I didn't continue to strategize beyond what I'd already done and I think that's a mistake a lot of people make.

We don't continue the learning and strategizing because we think we've already figured out as much as we can, and we haven't.

This happens often when I start coaching in my groups. People have an understanding of why they binge, and they've tried to address that reason, but then they still binge.

And they've been stopping there.

So when we're coaching, I take it another step further with them. I help them understand why they still binge when they're trying what they're trying and why it's not working. Then, we come up with another strategy. And they try that. And it may stop them from bingeing. But if it doesn't, I help them understand why, and we work on a new strategy.

So often there are layers and we have to keep peeling them back.

You peel them back and find something else that is causing you to binge.

For most people, my self included, there isn't just one simple reason for why they binge.

There might be several diet mentality and overly restrictive thoughts that they need to work on, there may be all or nothing perfectionist thinking, there might be body image issues, there might be negative thoughts about themselves, or lack of belief in themselves, or a lack of awareness, or a fear of emotions, it could be a few of those, or all of them, or something else.

And your last binge will show you at least one reason why you continue to binge.

And if you binge in the future, that binge might show you another reason why you binge.

For me, sometimes it was emotional. Sometimes it was a reaction to restriction. Sometimes it was something else. And each binge showed me that. I just didn't take the time to look and that's one reason why I binged for so long.

If you continue to binge it doesn't mean you aren't able to stop or there's something wrong with you, it just means there's another layer that needs to be addressed and worked on.

There's another belief or pattern or habit that needs to be worked on.

When binges happen, you can't just declare defeat or think there isn't more you can do or go and try the same thing again without making an adjustment.

Something needs to change and that binge you just had is showing you what it is that needs to change.

Your binges will highlight what you need to work on. Your binges are opportunities for you to learn something so you can do better in the future.

Don't ignore it. Look for it.

So if you binge, first have compassion for yourself, forgive yourself, and then get curious. Break down what happened and get as much information as you can about what was going on, what you were thinking, and what you were feeling.

Then, explore strategies for how you can do differently in the future. Come up with a plan that addresses whatever it is that you do remember about what lead up to or started that binge.

Then put it into practice.

And if you do binge again, repeat the process. Learn another thing about yourself and about your binges, and prepare to do something different.

Your binges can help you if you take the time to think about them.

So take the time.

Alright, until next time, bye bye.