

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #294: Forgiving Yourself For Bingeing and Gaining Weight

Hi! Today's episode is about forgiving yourself.

Forgiving yourself for any binges you had, for any excessive eating you did, and for gaining weight.

This can be a hard thing for a lot of people to do because they have so much anger and resentment built up about these things.

They're so mad at themselves for having binged and for having gained weight.

And a lot of the time, the reason why they can't let go of the anger about their weight gain is because they're so angry about the bingeing.

I remember when I had gained weight because of my bingeing and I was mad about the weight gain but I was even madder about what got me there.

I was so fed up with the bingeing and so mad that I hadn't been able to stop it and to me, the weight gain was not only a reflection of the excessive amounts of food that I'd eaten, but I also thought it was also a reflection of how out of control I felt, how undisciplined I felt, and a reflection of my gluttony. That's what I made it mean.

So yeah I was angry about the weight gain but I was more angry about what I had done to cause it.

And I didn't want to feel so angry toward myself but after so many years of trying and failing at both stopping binge eating and getting to and maintaining my goal weight, it was hard for me not to.

And I see that happen with a lot of other people. There is so much anger toward themselves because of what they've done to themselves with the eating and the weight gain.

And this can be a problem because sometimes that anger can lead to angry eating. It can lead to frustration eating. It's the kind of eating where you don't even care anymore or you think it won't matter anyway, and you're just stuffing the food down maybe to try and feel better, maybe because you've been too restrictive and this is your angry rebellion.

The anger can also be tied up with negative self-talk, negative beliefs about yourself.

You might be thinking you're worthless, that you're a screw up, that you'll never be able to change, that you've wasted so much time, thoughts like those.

I know the time wasted one was a common one for me. I was mad at myself for wasting so much time eating and recovering from binges and exercising to undo what I did, and sitting with my notepad coming up with a plan for which foods I wouldn't allow myself to eat anymore and how I could manipulate my calorie goal to stop me from bingeing.

And when you have this kind of negative self-talk, it can stop you from doing what you need to do to stop binge eating. When you're thinking you're worthless, or are a screw up, or are not going to be able to change, you're not going to put in the effort to change. When you think you've wasted time and you feel angry about this, you're unlikely going to be motivated to change.

Now, you might at some point flip your self-talk and get yourself motivated to do something but when you're in that angry place, thinking that way about yourself, it's unlikely. Anger toward yourself is most likely not going to motivate you to better yourself.

And also, that anger you feel could affect your life in non-food ways too. You could just be showing up in your life and interacting with people in an angry way. You're acting as an angry person so you're not as patient and not as kind, and that's probably not how you want to be.

So this anger that you're holding on to is going to affect you and your life.

And holding on to anger is optional.

You taking to yourself so negatively and continuing to replay what happened, and being hard on yourself for it is not required. You don't have to keep doing that to yourself.

And you can forgive yourself instead.

Forgiveness happens when you stop feeling angry about what you did, when you stop mentally beating yourself up for it and being so hard on yourself.

Forgiveness is not condoning. You don't have to believe that it was the right thing and you don't have to allow it to keep happening.

Forgiveness means you're letting go of the anger you're holding on to.

And you can start doing that by having compassion.

You can forgive yourself for not knowing how to do differently, even if you did know better, or if you had a lot of knowledge, and especially if you didn't.

For a long time, I had pretty much no knowledge. For most of the years that I was binge eating, there was not nearly as much information out there as there is now.

That's the same for a lot of other people who have been bingeing for decades. We were bingeing before it had been figured out.

And even if you do have a lot of knowledge, so many of us know what to do but aren't doing it. And we don't have to get mad at ourselves for not doing it.

We can explore why we're not and understand why we're not and from there, we can understand how we can get out of our own way.

I see so many people get frustrated with this, and I did too.

And a lot of the time it's because we think we know everything there is to know, we think we have all the knowledge that we need, but we don't.

When I coach with my group members, I always showing them things about themselves that they weren't aware of. They had no knowledge that they were doing this thing that was keeping them binge eating or no knowledge that they weren't quite doing what they needed to be doing or didn't have the knowledge of a different way of looking at things, a different perspective.

You binged and gained weight not because you're a bad person, or a malicious person, or because you were trying to sabotage yourself.

You did it because it's what you knew to do and because you didn't know how to stop. You may have had a broad understanding but didn't see your personal obstacles that were in your way. You didn't know what they were and/or how to overcome them.

So you can stop being mad at yourself for now knowing.

You can have understanding and compassion instead.

Letting go of the anger will allow you to accept what you've done and accept where you are and when you do, you'll be in a much better place to do better and make the changes you want to make.

Again, remember how you act when you're feeling angry.

When you're in acceptance, you're feeling more at peace and calm and when you're feeling that way, you will think more clearly, you will make more rational decisions that will help you to prevent binges and prevent yourself from feeling urges, and you will be able to do better.

When you feel better you do better, you've probably seen that for yourself so many times. Letting go of your anger, forgiving yourself, and accepting what happened and where you are will help you to do better.

What happened happened. This is where you are.

Now what?

Now, you're going to do everything you can to get to where you want to be.

Now, you're going to figure this out.

Now, you're going to get help.

Instead of wallowing in the past, you're going to do everything you can now and in the future.

And you'll become better because of it.

I no longer think of those years I was bingeing as time wasted.

Instead, I think of them as part of what got me to this amazing place I'm in now.

If I hadn't done that, I wouldn't be in a career I love helping people with something that is so personal to me.

And also, I do believe I have the best relationship with food that I've ever had and I don't think I would have had I not struggled so hard.

I'd probably just be living with tons of diet mentality, thinking it's normal, like so many people do, and food and eating would take up so much more mental space than it needs to.

Because I binged for all those years, it gave me a reason to dive into the work that I do with my group members for myself. I may not have done it otherwise.

And I love where I am. I'm not a perfect thinker or doer, and I never will be, but it's so much better here.

Maybe you can't see it now, but those years haven't been wasted. For some reason, they helped you to become the best version of yourself you can be.

And anything negative that you tell yourself about you being someone who binged for all those years and for being someone who gained weight is not true and you don't have to keep telling yourself that.

You don't have to use up your mental space and mental energy on all that negativity about yourself.

You don't deserve all that negativity no matter what you've done and no matter where you are now.

You can forgive yourself, you can have compassion for yourself, you can understand why you did it, you can be kind to yourself as you keep going, and you can figure this out and stop it. And you will.

You don't deserve the anger. You're just a person who didn't know how to do differently.

Let go of the anger and forgive.

You'll feel and do so much better when you do.

Alright, that's all for now. Bye bye.