

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #297: Eating Just Because Other People Are

Hello! Let's jump right in.

Do you ever eat just because everyone else is, even though you're not hungry, or even though you're full, or even though you don't really want to?

And then later you wish you hadn't?

Well in this episode, I'm going to help you to stop doing that, to stop using other people eating as a reason for why you're eating when you don't really want to be eating.

And I'll start with the most common reason why people do it, why they eat when other people are eating, even if they don't really want to.

And the reason is, because they don't want it to be awkward or uncomfortable.

They think that not eating when other people are will be uncomfortable and awkward for both themselves and the other person.

It's as if only one person eating or only one person not eating creates an awkward, uncomfortable situation but, it doesn't.

The situation is just a situation.

The situation in itself isn't awkward.

What makes it awkward is our thoughts about the situation.

We make it awkward, in our mind.

If I'm not eating while everyone else is, I'm only going to make it uncomfortable and awkward for myself if I'm thinking it's awkward, if I'm thinking I'm being weird, if I think I'm not connecting with the other person, or if I think I should be eating.

Again, the situation isn't awkward, we *feel* awkward, and our feelings come from our thoughts, not what we're doing or not doing.

I don't eat when other people are eating sometimes and I don't feel awkward, because I'm not thinking it's awkward, or weird, or uncomfortable, or that I should be eating because they are.

So we need to stop saying that not eating when other people are is uncomfortable or awkward. It's not. You just make it that way with your thoughts while you're in the situation.

Now, I also get that sometimes people will make comments about you not eating and you feel uncomfortable then.

But, it's not their comments that makes you uncomfortable, it's your thoughts about their comments.

If they're saying it's weird that you're not eating, and you agree with them, you are also thinking it's weird, then you're going to feel uncomfortable doing this thing that you think is weird.

But, if they're saying it's weird that you're not eating, and you disagree, and you're thinking it's actually normal because you're not hungry, and not eating when you're not hungry is normal, or you're full, and not eating when you're full is normal, or you just don't want the food that's there, and not eating food you don't want to eat is normal, then you're not going to feel uncomfortable.

You're going to feel comfortable in your decision to not eat, even if other people think it's weird, or awkward.

Just because someone else says it's weird or awkward, doesn't mean you have to agree.

You can be solid in your decision to not eat for reasons you like and feel totally comfortable.

Now, they might feel uncomfortable if you don't eat but, you are not responsible for how they feel.

Their feelings, just like yours, are coming from their thoughts, and what they choose to think about you not eating is on them.

You don't have to eat just to make them feel comfortable. You can choose to not eat if you don't want to, and if they feel uncomfortable, you can let them feel uncomfortable.

It's okay if they feel uncomfortable.

For all of us, it's okay if we feel uncomfortable. We're going to be okay.

It's okay if you feel uncomfortable, it's okay if other people do, it's just part of being a human.

And you have authority over how uncomfortable you feel about not eating and they have authority over how they feel if you're not eating.

You don't have to eat just to make them comfortable, which may in turn leave you feeling uncomfortable afterward.

You can make your choice and it's okay if they feel uncomfortable with your choice. It will pass and they will be okay.

So, awkwardness and discomfort is optional if you are not eating while other people are.

You're not doing anything wrong, you're not being weird, and you still belong.

Another reason why people eat when other people are is because they want to feel like they belong.

If they're not eating, and aren't engaging in the same activity other people are, they feel left out, like they're not part of the group.

But you still are, even if you're not eating.

You still matter, you still belong, you can still contribute with your words and actions, you can still be a part of what they're talking about, and that includes the food.

There's been times when I'm not eating but I'm asking the person about what they're eating, or I'm sharing a story about when I ate that kind of food before.

You don't have to be left out just because you're not eating. You're still part of the group.

And another thing that comes up, going back to the awkwardness, is that people don't know what to do if they're not eating while everyone else is.

If you're thinking you don't know what to do, you're going to feel awkward.

And here's the thing, you don't need to do anything.

Like I said a moment ago, you can contribute with conversation.

But even if you're not, say the other people are talking about something that you don't know anything about or something you aren't interested in, you can just be there, listening, doing nothing, and it's okay.

So many of us are so caught up in the idea that we always need to be doing something, or always need to be a part of every conversation happening around us, and if we're not, we get uncomfortable.

But it's okay to just be there, being with the people, being quiet, listening.

You don't have to *do* anything.

And when you are thinking that you're okay just being there, not eating, talking when you have something to say and just listening when you don't, then you won't feel awkward.

You can feel content, doing what you want to do and just being a part of the group or just being with the person you're with.

But then, beyond the awkwardness, there's the FOMO, the fear of missing out.

When you see them eating and you're not, you might think they're getting something that you're not.

They're getting pleasure while you're not.

But that doesn't have to be true.

Just because you're not eating doesn't mean that you have to be devoid of pleasure.

As I said a moment ago, you can still find pleasure in the company of the people you're with, by having enjoyable conversations, or by taking in your surroundings.

No food doesn't have to mean no pleasure, or less pleasure.

And really, if you do eat that food when you're not *really* wanting it, because you're full, or because you want to wait to eat until you're hungry, or you just don't even want that food, or whatever your reason is, then how much pleasure are you really going to get from eating it?

If you're not all in on your decision to eat it, if you're conflicted while you're eating it, then you're not going to get as much pleasure as you would if you *were* all in on your decision and if eating it is exactly what you want to do.

And honestly, staying true to yourself, following through on your decisions, and doing what you know you really want to be doing, is so pleasurable.

It might not feel like it in the moment sometimes, although sometimes it can, but definitely afterward, when you stuck to what you really wanted to do, it feels so good.

When it comes to pleasure, eating the food that everyone else is eating isn't the only way to get it.

If you're not making it awkward in your mind, if you're comfortable with your decision because you're confident in your decision, if you are getting your pleasure in that moment in different ways, then the whole situation will be fine, you'll be fine, and it will be so much easier for you to be in integrity with yourself.

And there's one last thing I want to say about this.

If you're not going to eat when other people are, please make sure you're doing it for reasons you like and for reasons that aren't wrapped up in diet mentality.

What I mean by that is, don't do it because you think you're doing something wrong if you eat, or you're telling yourself that food is bad and you shouldn't eat it, or you're telling yourself that you can't eat it, or you have to not eat so you can lose weight, or you're punishing yourself for having binged recently, reasons like those.

If you're not going to eat, one of the best reasons for doing it would be because of how you think you'll feel physically if you do eat it.

I might say no if it's sugar before bed because I don't want to feel jittery or get a sugar high that will stop me from sleeping well.

This scenario actually happened a couple nights ago for me. I had some friends over and before they left, I offered them some chocolate. All three of them ate some and I didn't have any. It wasn't because I was trying to be good, or even because I had already eaten one earlier in the day.

I did it because I was going to bed right after they left and I know how sugar before bed can negatively impact my sleep.

That same day, my friend offered all of us these yummy looking granola bars and I declined because we were going out to dinner in a little over an hour and I didn't want the bar to take away any hunger I might have for dinner. I was going to pay for a meal, and I wanted to eat as much as I could, until I got full, and I didn't want the bar to stop me from doing that.

I wanted to be a good amount of hungry for dinner and didn't want the bar to stop me from feeling that.

And with my boyfriend and I, there's so many times when we're either at my place or his and we're not eating at the same time.

A few nights ago, I ate dinner by myself because I was hungry and he wasn't. A little while later, he finished his leftovers from lunch while I wasn't eating.

I was full from dinner so I wasn't going to eat something just because he was eating. And he wasn't going to eat with me when he wasn't hungry yet.

We both liked our reasons for eating and when the other person was eating and we weren't, neither of us felt or made it awkward. I mean, I'm not in his head so I don't know for sure what he was thinking and feeling but in all the times this has happened to us, he's never said anything about him being uncomfortable or about it being awkward.

And it is this way for us because we both understand that we're going to be hungry at different times and full at different times and have random cravings for joy food at different times.

If he wants to eat chips for fun, that doesn't mean I have to too if I don't want to.

And I can still hang out with him and enjoy myself, while not eating.

So make sure you're not not eating because of a "shouldn't," or "can't," that you're telling yourself, or because you think it's bad or wrong, because it's not bad or wrong, and you can and should eat

something if you want to and if you don't have a good reason, that's not a diet mentality reason, for saying no.

Love your reason, feel good about your reason, make sure it's an empowering reason that you are making based off of your true wants, not what you think you should or shouldn't do.

When you're owning it as your choice, it will be so much easier for you to feel comfortable not eating.

When you think you don't have a choice and you have to not eat, that's when you're going to feel uncomfortable.

And when you feel comfortable with your decision, you won't feel awkward.

So own your decision, because it is your decision, and only decide to not eat when you love your reason for not eating.

And if you don't have a good reason that you love, then go ahead and eat if you want to.

Alright, until next time, bye bye.