

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #299: Distracting Yourself To Get Through an Urge to Binge

Hello! Before we get started, I want to give you a head's up that registration for the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program will be opening in one month, on May 22nd of 2024.

This is going to be a chance for you to get help beyond the podcast, and actually work with me personally on stopping binge eating.

When you join, you will get a comprehensive program where you will get The Stop Binge Eating Course, which will give you a structure to follow and you'll go in depth on how you'll stop being overly restrictive with your eating, how to feel through your emotions and urges without eating, how to eat like a quote "normal person," how to improve your body image, and so, so much more.

You'll also get weekly group coaching calls, unlimited written coaching, and monthly one on one coaching that will help you to actually apply what you've learned and know to do. I'm going to help you uncover what it is you need to do differently, give you strategies for how to do it differently, help you to overcome whatever it is that keeps getting in your way, give you feedback, give you new perspectives, and answer any questions you have along the way. So you're not just going to be doing this on your own and you won't be expected to figure everything out on your own. I'll be there with you, and we'll be working as a team.

You'll also participate in eating workshops that will help you build trust and confidence in yourself and these can also completely change your relationship with the foods you've binged on and help you to feel more in control of what you eat.

And you'll also get accountability, which can be extremely helpful for people, especially those of you who have a hard time staying committed. You'll be able to tell me what you want to be held

accountable for and when you want me to follow up with you and I'll follow up with you to see if you did it. Also, if I don't see you being active in the program, I will message you and email you because I don't want you to give up on yourself and I definitely won't give up on you.

So you're going to get so much that will help you to stop binge eating, so much that will help you to change your relationship with food, change your eating habits, and change yourself and your mind.

So if you want all that, get ready to register on May 22nd of 2024 by going to coachkir.com/group and joining the waitlist. Once you're on that waitlist, you'll get notified via email as soon as registration opens so you can get started on the coursework right away before the program officially begins.

And if you have any questions about the program, you can email them to info@coachkir.com.

You don't have to do this on your own and even though I personally think this podcast has tons of helpful information, tools, and tips, this program will offer you even more resources to help you.

So come join me!

Alright, now let's talk about today's episode topic – distracting yourself to get through the urge to binge.

Distraction is one of the most common tools people try to use when they're feeling an urge to binge.

They try to ignore the urge, try to get their mind on something else, and they think that if they aren't putting their focus on the urge then it will eventually just go away.

So they might try going for a walk, exercising, scrolling through their phone, calling someone, reading, painting their nails, watching a movie, playing an instrument, taking a bath, cleaning, organizing, doing chores, crocheting, knitting, doing their favorite hobby, they just try to do something that's not eating food.

And sometimes, it might work. They might go and do that thing, and soon after, they realize they're not thinking about eating or about bingeing anymore. They're forgotten about eating. The urge has disappeared.

And if you distract yourself and it works, great. If something works for you and there isn't a negative consequences at the end, then there's nothing wrong with doing that.

But for most people, most of the time, especially when emotions are high or when the urge is more intense, it's not that easy.

It's not as easy as just going and doing something else that's not food-related.

It's not that easy to ignore the urge.

I've compared urges to toddlers many times throughout these episodes and I'm going to do it again here.

Think about a really persistent toddler that really wants something. You might be able to ignore them and just let them urge you for a little bit, but if you're not actively doing something or saying something to get them to stop, they'll keep going and not stop and eventually, you can't ignore them anymore. It gets to you.

And when the urge to binge is persistent, it can also be hard to ignore and ignoring it doesn't stop it.

Eventually, most people who are trying to ignore the urge end up getting frustrated, annoyed, or panicked after awhile. They're still thinking about eating, they don't want to be thinking about eating, they don't want the urge to be there anymore, they're tired of feeling the urge, they're over it and fed up. And when they get to that point, they just want to make it go away and eating is how they'll do it. So they try to distract until they realize the urge isn't going away and because they're feeling so annoyed, frustrated, or panicked at this point, they just give in to it to shut the urge up.

Also, doing something different from what you're doing, in order to distract yourself, isn't always an option.

What if you're in a meeting and you can't just leave or blatantly stop paying attention and put your focus on something else?

Or what if you're prepping dinner for your family and you aren't just going to abandon your cooking?

What if it's 9pm and you don't know of anyone you can call at that time, or the people you call don't answer, and it's dark so you can't go for a walk, or it's raining, or you're tired so you don't even have the energy or desire to engage in your hobbies, and you have no desire to clean or organize, and it's too late to exercise because that would negatively impact your sleep, and you're already watching a movie so watching a movie wouldn't be something different from what you're doing? What if none of the options for distraction are really helpful options for you in that moment? Either you can't do them or you don't want to do them and for distraction to work, you have to be able to and want to do the thing.

So although distracting yourself can work sometimes, it's not going to be a reliable way to handle your urge to binge because it's not always going to work and it's not always a helpful option.

So it shouldn't be the only tool you have in your toolbox.

There has to be something else for you to do when distracting yourself isn't the solution.

And what I recommend you do, is to actually put your focus on the urge and talk yourself through it.

Think about any problem you've ever had in your life that you solved, after ignoring it didn't solve it.

What did you do? You put your attention on it and you actively worked through it.

If you have a problem with a person, and ignoring the problem the doesn't help, and you're getting frustrated about how it's affecting you, and you aren't able to just cut that person out of your life, then you address the problem and work through it with them.

If there is a leaky faucet in your home that keeps making dripping noises, and after ignoring the problem it doesn't go away, and you keep getting annoyed with the noise, and you aren't going to just

plug it up because you use that faucet every day, then you address the problem and you fix it or get someone to fix it for you.

If you're feeling an urge to binge, address what's going on with you and work on it.

What that means is that you first take a moment to acknowledge that you're feeling an urge. You put your attention on it and tell yourself, "I'm feeling an urge to binge." If you're going to work through this urge, you have to first acknowledge that it's even there instead of trying to pretend like it's not.

Then, instead of getting frustrated or annoyed with the fact that it's there, and instead of panicking about it, you're going to accept this discomfort that you're feeling. You're not going to get afraid that you're going to binge because you're in charge of whether or not you make that decision. The urge can't make you binge and you can decide to feel the urge without bingeing. You're not going to tell yourself you wish it wasn't there or that it shouldn't still be there or that you can't handle it. You're going to accept that you are feeling uncomfortable, and you're going to calm yourself just as you would if you were trying to calm someone else.

Imagine if someone else was feeling uncomfortable, and they were feeling like they *had* to do something you know they really don't want to do. What would you say to them?

That's what you're going to say to yourself to help yourself to calm down and be willing to just be in this temporary discomfort.

And then you're going to choose to stay in it, instead of choosing to eat to make it go away.

And while you're feeling that discomfort, while you're allowing yourself to be in it, after you've acknowledged it and after you've accepted it and calmed yourself as much as you can, you can breathe through it.

And also, if you want to, you can do one of those distraction activities you usually do.

But the different this time is that you've actually begun to process through the urge before jumping into the activity.

And while you're doing that activity, if your focus goes back to the urge, you're going to again accept it and choose to feel it.

And when you're in a calmer state than you were when you started processing the urge, and if you're doing this properly, you will move toward calm, you can tell yourself why you really don't want to binge. You can tell yourself what the negative consequences would be, what would happen that would negatively impact you.

You can tell yourself why you'd rather feel this discomfort than the discomfort of having binged.

And telling yourself all that can help the urge to pass too because you're making bingeing seem less desirable and the less desirable it is to you, the less of an urge you will feel for it. We don't urge for things that aren't desirable.

So instead of trying to ignore the urge until it goes away, you can put your attention on it and work through it in your mind.

You can acknowledge it, accept it, choose to feel it, and then breathe, or do something enjoyable, or something that's not eating food, and if the urge keeps grabbing your focus, just repeat the process, and tell yourself your reasons, that are important to you, for why you want to feel this instead of eating.

Distracting can help sometimes but when it doesn't, or when it's not a realistic option, working through the urge will be and will help.

You can get through your urge without eating. You can handle it productively.

And as I mentioned at the beginning of this episode, if you want personalized help with doing this, I will help you in The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program. Sometimes, with some things, we can understand how to do them, and it can make total sense, but then, for some reason, we have a hard time doing it. I will help you to uncover what that reason is and how you're going to make it easier for you to do it so you'll actually do it.

Again, you can find all the info about the program at coachkir.com/group, you can also join the waitlist there, and registration for the next round will be opening on May 22nd of 2024.

Alright, you go work through your urges, and for the record, you can go through this same process with your emotions as well. Work through things instead of ignoring them, hoping they'll go away. Alright, I'll talk to you again soon, bye bye.