

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #303: Binge Eating Success Story – Kandace

Hi! Today on the podcast you're going to hear from Kandace who is a binge eating success story!

She went through my Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching program last year and while in the program, and in the 7 months since the program has ended, she has made so many amazing changes within herself and with her eating.

For so many years, she was bingeing, doubting that she could stop, thinking there was something wrong with her, and it had such a negative impact on her life.

But because she committed herself to stopping binge eating, and she put in the work, and she didn't give up on herself, she and her life are so much better because of it.

So now, I'm going to let her tell you her story, from when she went to her first Weight Watchers meeting until now, when she's completely binge-free.

So here we go, here's my conversation with Kandace.

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Kirstin:

Hello, Kandace.

Kandace:

Hello.

Kirstin:

All right. So let's begin by just having you tell us a little bit about yourself. With your eating background, food, weight, whatever relevant thing you have to tell us. Go for it.

Kandace:

Yes. So from an early age, I was introduced to the dieting culture. So I have a twin sister, interesting fact, and she was always overweight as a child. My mom did a lot of dieting growing up, and I remember when we were younger, my mom took my sister with her to a Weight Watchers meeting. We were probably about no older than 12. And because my mom didn't want my sister to feel left out, I went with them, also being her twin. So I tagged along and I remember just being in awe of what was going on and really confused and there were so many adults there. And then I was doing it with them. Also again, really confused, wasn't sure what's going on, tracking and doing all that kind of stuff. And so that was my first introduction. And then from then on I've seen my mom go through a lot of different phases, trying a lot of different diets and things like that.

And then also trying to get my sister to do them with her. And then hearing my dad talk a lot about her weight and everything, it was just always there. And so that was the beginning of just realizing like, "Oh, is this something I need to be concerned about and whatnot?" And then it wasn't until my senior year of high school, it was the summer before my senior year was when I thought, "You know what? I want to lose some weight. It's going to be my senior year. Let's do this." And so I remember that summer eating just the smart ones. My mom had been doing the frozen meals and forcing myself to go run. I hated it, did not enjoy it, but I was like, "This is what I have to do." And technically it worked. I did lose weight. But when school hit, I just slowly returned back to all of the way I used to be.

But I could tell something was different, just my food habits starting to change, the way I view food started to change. And then by the time I hit college, was then when the cycle really began. And so that was my early childhood and what led me into the start of binge eating really.

Kirstin:

And so how long do you think you were binge eating for? And how often do you think?

Kandace:

It was 17 years. And it just blows my mind to think about that, because such a long time to be doing that, to be stuck in that world. And I would say it varied throughout that time. It would be anywhere from every day to maybe every other day, but it was constantly every week at least. Every week throughout all those 17 years. It was always there, always happening. Not a week would go by without it happening.

Kirstin:

And why do you think it continued for so long?

Kandace:

Because I used food as a coping mechanism to comfort me. When I was sad, when I wanted distraction, even when I was happy, I would use it to celebrate. And I used it for everything. And even though I knew that this wasn't what I should be doing or getting the negative effects from it, that's the only thing I knew. I was just returning to the same thing, the same thing, the same thing. Because while it was happening, it was working for a second and then it wouldn't anymore. And so I just kept coming back to it and kept coming back to it. So that's why it continued for so long.

Kirstin:

Yeah. And you said that it was negatively affecting you. So how was it negatively affecting you?

Kandace:

So it's crazy because those 17 years that it was going on in my life were during such crucial developmental years for me as a person. I graduated high school, I went to college, I met my husband, got married, and had both of my kids within this period of time. And through all of those moments, it affected all of them in such different ways, but mostly I just was never fully present. It was on my mind 24x7, that's all I could think about. It mentally was just exhausting and it consumed my mind. And then physically. Physically I didn't feel well, or maybe my husband would want to go out, but I didn't. Didn't like the way I felt because of the way I looked. So I'd be like, "I'm not really feeling good. I don't think I want to go." And it affected every single aspect of my life and my relationships. How I was at work, how I interacted with people, it just consumed everything. And I didn't realize that until getting out of it. Exactly all that it took over.

Kirstin:

And did you have an understanding of why you were doing it at the time too? Because you said that you were using it as a way to cope and emotions and all of that. Were you aware of that?

Kandace:

I was to a point. But naively I was like, "There's just something wrong with me. That's why this is happening." It wasn't because I was doing it. It was some other outside thing or however you want to word it, that was making me do. I didn't think I had the control and whatnot. So I knew what I was doing, but yet didn't fully, if that makes sense.

Kirstin:

Yeah, that totally makes sense. It totally makes sense. So not knowing why you were doing it and also thinking that it wasn't really you, like you were out of control, how you said, what were you trying to do to stop it? Were you trying to stop it?

Kandace:

I was, and I was going about it in every wrong way. The biggest one was trying each and every fad diet. Whether it was low carb, keto, Weight Watchers, just anything you could think of. Trying all these diets, thinking that it was a lack of willpower and control. And if I followed these that gave me a blueprint of how I'm supposed to eat, then I could do it. So I was constantly going from one to another, to another, to another, failing all of them every single time and just thinking it was me. And then I just got to the point where I thought, "Okay, it is me. This is my life and there is something wrong with me and I just have to live with it."

Kirstin:

So at that point, you just didn't believe that you'd be able to stop this.

Kandace:

Never in a million years would I have ever thought of it. Because at this point in my life, I've spent over half my life doing it. And so I truly did not know any other way because my early years were the only years I didn't do it, and I couldn't remember that. So I didn't know any other way than what I already knew, and I just thought, "Yeah, I'm an unfortunate person and this is my life."

Kirstin:

So there was some point where you must have made a shift thinking, "Okay. There is a way out of this", because otherwise you wouldn't have been looking for a solution. I'm sure that my podcast didn't just fall in your lap. Maybe it did. I don't know.

Kandace:

It did, and I don't remember. I wish I could remember how I came upon it. I don't know if it was suggested by somebody, because I remember at one point starting to look, thinking like, "Oh, maybe there's some books or something." You know how they have the self-help books and stuff like that. "Maybe I can come across something like that, that maybe will help." Because like I said, "I was running out of all ideas and somehow I did." I stumbled upon your podcast and I listened to it right away, and instantly it was like nothing I'd ever heard of before. And I was thinking, "Man, she's talking directly to me." And it was so relatable and I felt heard and seen in ways that I never thought. And then it made me realize I'm not the only one. And then you talk about how you went through it, and I thought, "Okay, mate." It gave me a smidgen of hope.

At that time I still thought, "I'm going to be that one that can't do it. There's always that person, and I thought that that would be me. But just the more I listened to your podcast and the more I heard and the more information I got, I just thought, "Okay. Maybe this is doable." So that's what got me to start to think this is possible.

Kirstin:

And I think that's what happens for a lot of people where there's just so much doubt. There is very, very little belief, but then it just keeps creeping in. The belief just keeps creeping in a little bit and you're like, "Well, maybe there's the book. Well, maybe there's something." And we just start to Google and we're like, "I don't even know if I fully believe this, but maybe."

Kandace:

Yes, you have that hope.

Kirstin:

Yes. Yes. It keeps coming in and that is what gets the ball rolling because you do find something. And then like you said, you were listening and then the belief started to grow and grow and grow. And then at some point you decided that you wanted to take this beyond the podcast and actually sign up for the program and do this work with me and with the group. So why do you think that you decided to sign up when you did?

Kandace:

Oh gosh. I remember thinking, "If this is what's on the podcast, I can't imagine what it would be like one-on-one." Really, I was just so blown away with it and so I knew I needed it. And I know it sounds so cheesy, but I was really like, it's now or never. I've wasted so much life and I didn't want to do that anymore. And your podcast resonated with me so much like nothing ever had before. I felt like it was made for me. And I thought, "Okay. If I'm going to do something, this is how I'm going to fix it." And I knew there was no other way.

Kirstin:

Yeah. And why do you think that you were so committed to doing this?

Kandace:

Because I think the biggest thing is, I had failed at everything else. In my way, it wasn't working. My way was not working and I knew I needed to change and I was just wasting my life. And my health was deteriorating, I was at the biggest size I'd ever been at, and I was just broken, and I knew I needed to do it now or never. And so that really motivated me to think, "Okay, let's do this." But then working with you was just another part that helped it. Helped me realize, "Okay, I can change." And that was another motivation because I'd never had felt that way before. Like, "Okay, this is possible. This is doable." Every little win turned into a bigger one and a bigger one that helped me commit, make changes and think, "Okay, I can do it. I can commit and I will do it." I remember one day feeling that way. I was like, "I'm doing in person, not just I think I can, but I am doing it." So yeah, it was just now or never.

Kirstin:

Yeah. So little by little the changes were happening, little by little the confidence was building. What do you think was the most challenging part throughout that process?

Kandace:

I think it was realizing that I was making the choices. Going through your lessons, there were certain lessons and certain things that you said, that made complete sense and I knew it. But hearing it come from you, the way you said it was like an aha moment. And you were like, "Your urge isn't making you eat. You're getting up and you're doing it yourself. You're physically doing it." And I think taking those, responsibility for those actions was probably the biggest thing. Because before I would've been like, "Oh, I wasn't in control. That wasn't me." It was like an out of body experience. "No, it was me. I was in control." And I think that was the biggest thing that I learned was the responsibility for myself, my actions. I'm the one staying in this pattern, this cycle. It is all me and my choices.

Kirstin:

And why do you think that that had such an impact on you?

Kandace:

I think it did because if I knew that I was in control, I was making the choices, I was making the decisions, then I would be the one to change them. If I was in control and I was doing this, then I could turn it around. My fate wasn't in somebody else's hands, it was in my hands. And so me taking responsibility was me who was going to change it, and that gave me hope again. It really just started from that.

Kirstin:

Yeah. It's so empowering to know this, to feel like you are the one who has control over this.

Kandace:

Yes, because I never felt that way before. I used to always feel like food had control over me. It was in charge. I worked around its schedule and everything like that, where this time it was like, "No. I'm in charge, I make the decisions. I'm going to choose what, when", all of that where I never had had that feeling before. And it was such a freeing feeling to say, "You know what? I don't want that. I'll eat it later. Or you know what? I think I will have an extra piece of cake to feel in control for once", was just amazing.

Kirstin:

So it made it easier for you to make the decisions that you want to make, once you took responsibility and acknowledged the control that you have.

Kandace:

Yes. And there was another thing you said in one of your lessons that stuck with me, and I constantly find myself remembering this because it's so true. You talked about, for instance, "If you're going to eat a bag of Oreos, where you stop is your choice." It's in the beginning or in the end. "Where you choose to stop, you are still making that choice." And you elaborate more on everything that can go into it, but that just stuck with me. So I don't know, it just imprinted on my brain. And again, going back to choices, it's your choice, it's me, it's my responsibility. And it really, as hard as it was, it was so empowering. So empowering.

Kirstin:

And before you were talking about how you were binging for all those years, partly because of how it helped you deal with your emotions. So how do you deal with your emotions now?

Kandace:

I actually deal with them. About the time that all this started happening, I was also diagnosed with depression and anxiety and I didn't want to feel that. And it just slowly as I got older, turned into other things. I don't want to deal with the hardness of life. This is too tough. And so I didn't deal with anything, and now I can. If something bad happens, I get bad news. My term two isn't a thing of Ben and Jerry's. I know that I have to sit, process it, because even if I eat that Ben and Jerry's, my problem is still going to be there. I'm just going to feel miserable afterwards. And if I have a night where I just need to cry, then I just cry. If that's what I needed, that's what I need. If I need to go on a walk, I'll handle it that way.

But now I actually deal with them and handle them in a healthy way, even though, yeah, it is uncomfortable, but nobody said life was going to be perfect a 100% of the time, which again is another thing you talk about. And you just hearing those things and that it really made me view problems differently and handle them differently, and you just feel so much better.

Kirstin:

And was it hard for you to start handling your emotions instead of eating to deal with them?

Kandace:

It was, because I didn't know how to, because I never had done it before. And so to sit with that discomfort, whether it lasted 10 minutes to two hours, stressed at work, something at home, maybe my

kids stress me out, anything. Any little sign of discomfort, I would run straight to something sweet usually. So this time it wasn't. It was actually sitting, feeling, dealing with the emotions, processing it. And it was hard and it took me time to get to where I felt like, "Okay, I can do this. I'm equipped." It took practice. But every single time that I practice it and I got it, it was like another win, another thing to put in the piggy bank to help me feel like, "Okay, I got the next one then. No, I can do the next one." And then if I felt like, "No, I don't got this one", I'd be like, "Well, no, look at my piggy bank. I got others in there." So that really helped.

Kirstin:

Yeah. So do you still feel urges to binge?

Kandace:

No. Now I'll overeat sometimes, but that's by choice. So if I want an extra piece of cake, I'm like, okay. But it's so different because now I choose to have it, because I want it and I know that it's not going to lead to anything else. After that, I'm done, I'm good for the night. I'm not going to restrict the next day or do anything like that. It doesn't change anything else. I just overate a little bit and I move on.

Kirstin:

So how do you think your relationship with food has changed?

Kandace:

It has changed in every way. I still love to eat. But to have control, moderation, things I've never had before, again, it's such an empowering feeling to have to feel in control and it makes me want to be better to myself. It wants me to be healthy. I find myself looking at food as fuel now too, because I'm loving myself, I'm loving my body and all that it's done for me and it's doing for me, and I want to treat it right. And after years of not, I want to change that. And so my view of it has changed in every single way. And so now I really just focus on balance. Balance is key. And never having that before, it's amazing to have it. It's such a freedom. Such a freedom. And I don't take it for granted, but I still work every day remembering things and just still getting those wins in and continuing doing what I'm doing.

Kirstin:

So even though our program ended... I don't know how long it's been since our program. It's been months.

Kandace:

Yes. It's been under a year. Yes.

Kirstin:

And you're still practicing everything, and that's a huge reason why you're continuing to be successful and are continuing to have everything that you created while you were in the program, right?

Kandace:

Yes. Like I said, there are certain things that just imprinted on my brain and have just changed my view, everything. And even in my life, I've changed how I view myself, how I view my body and in such positive ways. And now I'm using that to show my almost 13-year-old, getting her to do the same way. And in the beginning, my first thought going into it was, "Yeah, I want to stop, but I also want to lose

weight too. But then I realized again, my way is not the way, your way is the way. And so just a 100% trusting the program with everything and following it, giving myself to it a 100%, helped me make those changes fully and helps me continue to keep those changes and to continue to practice the program and still live by the program, I guess you could say.

Kirstin:

So you wanted to lose weight, but you knew my philosophy on it that we hold off on weight loss and just work on stopping binge eating first. So what was that like for you to just focus on the binge eating first?

Kandace:

I remember being like, "Are you kidding me? Of course that's what we all want to do. That's number one. Yes, of course we want to stop it, but don't those go together?" That was my thought. And I do, I remember at one point thinking, "You know what? I'm still going to focus on trying to lose weight." I remember thinking that, and I just had to have a hard talk to myself and say, you know what? Again, my way has not worked. It is not working. I committed to do this and I need to do it fully. I'm either in or I'm out. And so I knew the only way I could be successful is if I was a 100% in. So that's when I decided, "Okay, that goes on the back burner and this is my commitment."

Kirstin:

I think a lot of people go through that exact same thought process.

Kandace:

Yes, because you want to shed weight, you want to get out of your body, you're not happy with yourself. And you think, "No, this is what comes first." But no, it's working on that mindset is game changer. Game changer. And once I started that, it just naturally followed I guess, because I was treating myself right. I wasn't binging anymore. So with that came, that was a happy consequence that came with it or a happy little perk that came with that.

Kirstin:

So you said that now you have such a better relationship with yourself and with your body. What was it like before and then what is it like now?

Kandace:

Oh, before I could almost use the word hate and say that I hated my body. I never wanted to look at it. I would try to cover it in every single way that I could cover myself. I am very fortunate to have a husband who love me the same no matter what size that I was, but I still would be like, "Nope, I don't even want you to look at me, to touch me. I'm uncomfortable thinking to myself, if I don't love me, how can you love me", kind of mentality. And I tore it apart for everything, and I never looked at it for any of the good that it had done. So now here I am months later and it makes me sad. I could cry. It makes me sad to think about the way that I used to think about my body or the way I used to talk to myself or talk to myself about my body.

I look at it now and I think you got me through all of what we've been through. Through the times when I was over 300 pounds, my body didn't give up on me. My body still kept working. It still kept showing up for me. And granted, it helped me give birth to two little kids. But besides that, it's always been there and it's always going to be there. And I now have such an appreciation and I'm almost to the love part, such a love for it, for what it has been through, what it's done and what it's doing. My whole



mindset has really changed on it. And like I said, it's the way you think about it, but the way you speak to yourself too, that has changed drastically also. Just so much more nicer, happier, nice to yourself, and you speak positively and love yourself.

And going from always being negative, "You're not good enough. Why can't you stop? Oh, you screwed up. You did it again." Going through all those feelings when you're dieting, you just tear yourself down, tear yourself down, tear yourself down. You never give yourself credit or anything positive. And so going through this journey, I was speaking more positively to myself like, "Oh, look. You accomplished that win. Good job. Oh, you made a choice to go on a walk to make yourself feel better, not to lose weight, not to get in steps, but because you wanted to feel better. That's a win." Just so many things like that, that all came into me just loving me, my body better,\.

Kirstin:

My gosh. I love all of that so much. And some of the things you're saying about your body, it's just so beautiful to hear, really.

Kandace:

Thank you.

Kirstin:

So now with this new mindset, this new perspective, what is your life like now, compared to what it was like before?

Kandace:

It's so different. It is completely different. My mind is my mind. Is not controlled by food. It is not burning all that time, that energy thinking about it. And now my mind has time to think about things I want to think about, which that also was a big shocker to me was how much it consumed my thinking. Now I can think about what I want to think about. It has freed me up to be me again. To be the mom I want to be, to be the wife, to be the person I want to be without being consumed by food and thoughts and just feeling better about myself, feeling better physically. I carry myself better, I feel like I look at myself better. I respect myself. My view on myself is probably the biggest thing that has changed, and that to me has just been just as rewarding as stopping binging itself.

My mind is so much happier now, my life is so much happier now. And it's all because I stopped binging, but so many things came along with just stopping that. I didn't realize that ripple effect that it would have. And it has had such a ripple effect to where I almost wouldn't recognize the person anymore. And I've had people at work tell me that how different I am, and I've been, and not just physically, but mentally. They've noticed changes. It's just again, empowering to have control, and I felt like I've never had control over my own life. It's just an amazing feeling.

Kirstin:

And like you said, it's a ripple effect. It's gradual. And it's not like you stop binge eating and then, you're a different person. You become a different person as you're stopping binge eating. It's the things that you do in order to stop binge eating. The changes you make in your mind, the changes you make in your behaviors, that then leads you into not binging anymore, and then it all comes together.

Kandace:

Yes. If you would've told me when I first started your program like, "In a year, this is where you're going to be", I would've laughed and been like, "Oh, you're funny. I hope to be that in five years." The amount of time it took, like you said, it does not happen overnight, but when you fully make those changes and you put in the work and you try, it's amazing what you can do. It's amazing what your mind can do. And oh, it's such a powerful thing. Such a powerful thing. And I would've thought it would've taken years to get to where I am right now. And it didn't. And it just blows my mind. Blows my mind.

Kirstin:

How cool. So what would you say to someone else who has a past similar to yours. That has lots of doubts about whether they can be where you are now? What would you want to tell them?

Kandace:

I would say that it is possible, and everybody has that doubt. Everybody has that self-doubt. But if you have even the smallest little inkling to change, that's all that you need to get started, all that you need to get started. And I personally know I couldn't have done it by myself. I know that I needed your help. And with that, with the right help, anything's possible. It truly is. And you're going to be that one person that's like, "I'm that person that it's not going to be." And I think everybody thinks they're that person, but it's doable. There has to be part of you that wants to do it. There has to be a part of you that wants to do it. And if you do, that's all you need to get started, and Kirsten will help you get there the rest of the way.

She'll help guide you because that's really what did it for me was I had that little bit that I knew, "Okay, maybe I can do this." I didn't know how, but I thought, "Okay, maybe I can do this." And you gave me the tools to show me how. And so I took those tools and I ran, and it's possible. It really is.

Kirstin:

Together as a team. You and I, we did it. And the group. The group was there too.

Kandace:

Yes, it is. It just seems like it's a daunting task. Like, "Oh man." Like I said, 17 years, and I thought there's no way. There's no way I can, because I thought that there was something wrong with me. But when you learn that it's just your thinking, your habits. When you realize, no, there are things that you can change, then you realize that you can do something about it, that there's something you can do. And that I just... When you think that there's nothing you can do, like, "Oh, this is just the way I am", it just makes you feel like there's no hope. But like I said, when you introduce the tools and you give examples and show you how to use them, you use them yourself and see it work, then you're like, "Wow. Okay, I can do this." And it was just all those little victories that just kept me going thinking, "Yep, yep, yep. She's right. She's right."

Kirstin:

Yeah. You have given so much good stuff, so many little nuggets in this episode today, in this interview today. Are there any other words of wisdom that you would like to share that you haven't already?

Kandace:

I'm just going to go back to saying, and this is not Kirsten telling me this, this is me truthfully saying, working with you is what did it. I could not have done it by myself. Like I said, listening to the podcast, I felt like you were speaking to my soul and I knew I needed you by my side to do this and that

commitment, you're like, "Oh, should I take that leap?" Do not second guess it for one second. It is life changing. And I remember coming to you with things that I thought, "Oh my gosh, she is going to think I'm crazy. She's going to tell me no. Maybe there is something wrong with you and you didn't."

Everything I said, you knew and you understood, and you gave me guidance, and you handled it with just such love and care in a way to make me feel so heard and comfortable. And, just how you handled every situation, helped me get to where I am. I can't say enough about how amazing, not only just your program, but you are as a coach and a mentor, and you just need to do it. You will not regret it at all.

Kirstin:

Aw, Kandace. Well, thank you for those beautiful words and thank you for everything that you have shared today. It has been so amazing having you here.

Kandace:

Thank you.

Kirstin:

Hearing little bits of your story that I didn't hear as you were going through the group program. So, this was really fun. So thank you.

Kandace:

Thank you. Yes. Thank you for having me. I just loved it. So happy to get to share and hopefully try to encourage others to work with you and to be happy. Get a happy life again.

Kirstin:

Yes, happy life.

Kandace:

Yes.

Kirstin:

Awesome.

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What a transformation, right? So many changes with herself, with her self-talk, with her relationship with food, with her relationship with her body, with how eating affects her life, so many things.

I mean, did you hear how she was talking about her body at the end? So beautiful.

There were so many times when she didn't think that all of this was possible for her but, it clearly was.

She is so amazing and so much has improved and like she and I talked about, it wasn't just because she stopped binge eating but, it was because of who she became as she went through the process of stopping binge eating.

And if you want to go through the process she went through, you can join me in the next round of The Stop Binge Eating Program. Registration will be opening tomorrow, May 22<sup>nd</sup> of 2024 and you can get all the info and register at [coachkir.com/group](https://coachkir.com/group). And if you have questions that aren't answered on that page, email them to [info@coachkir.com](mailto:info@coachkir.com).

You can be like Kandace. You can change like she did. You can feel better like she does. I really hope you know that. Believe that. You can and you will.

Alright, I hope you enjoyed my conversation with Kandace I will talk to you next time. Bye bye!