

THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #317: Eating For Enjoyment vs For Controlling Emotions

Hi! Before we get started with this episode, I just want to give you a head's up that registration for The Stop Binge Eating Group Coaching Program will be closing in two days, on Thursday August 29th of 2024 at 12pm ET. So if you're joining, join now at coachkir.com/group.

I know some of you might be hesitant because you're doubting you will be successful.

You look at all the fails you've had in the past and are making those fails mean that you can't do it.

But they don't mean you can't do it. They just mean you haven't done it yet.

Pretty much everyone who is eventually successful with stopping binge eating has failed before they were successful.

I for sure failed tons of times.

And I failed because everything I was doing to stop was never going to work long-term. I was never getting to the root of why I was bingeing, I was just trying to control the food and trying to control myself.

It wasn't until I really understood why I was bingeing and addressed those reasons why that I stopped.

And that's what you're going to do too.

You're going to stop doing what hasn't been working and do something different that will actually address the cause of your bingeing.

And that's what we do in this program.

We work on your thoughts, what's happening in your mind, because your bingeing begins with your thinking.

And I've seen so many people, who have tried to stop bingeing for decades, finally stop because they're finally doing something that actually helps them to stop, instead of just trying to control the food, like I and so many people did.

So if you're ready to try something new, not a new diet or new distraction technique, but something new that is specific to binge eating, come join me in the program.

Again, you can register at coachkir.com/group, registration will be open until this Thursday August 29th of 2024 at 12pm ET and if you have any questions that aren't answered on that registration page, email them to info@coachkir.com.

You can do this. You just need to do something different than you've been doing.

Alright, and now onto today's episode topic – eating for enjoyment vs eating to control your emotions.

When you're eating when you're not hungry, you're doing one of those two things.

You're either eating just to experience pleasure and joy or, you're eating to change how you're feeling, to make yourself feel better, to make good feelings last longer, to basically manipulate your emotions.

Most people would probably say that eating for enjoyment is going to be a much better eating experience than eating to control emotions and that's the only reason why they want to eat when they're not hungry. I've had many of my group members say they much more enjoy eating for enjoyment than eating to control their emotions.

Now, you might think that you shouldn't ever eat to control your emotions.

But I don't think that's a rule you need to live by if you don't want to.

If you want to eat to relax, you are welcome to do that.

If you want to eat some comfort food when you're sad, you can do that.

And it can be fine.

If you're not doing it excessively, and you feel okay, then is it really a problem?

However, you might decide that you just don't want to use food to control your emotions and that's okay too. You can decide that for yourself and live by that.

It's just important for you to know why you're choosing to eat when you're not hungry because when you know, you can make a more informed decision about what you want to do.

And when you know why before you do it, and your decision is more informed, there will be less chance of regret and guilt afterward.

When you like your reasons for eating, you won't think you're doing anything wrong or bad so you won't feel guilt.

You're only going to feel guilt if you think it was wrong or bad, and same for regret. It happens when you think you shouldn't have done it.

So you can eat when you're not hungry for whatever reason you want to but, make sure it's a reason you want to eat for before you start eating.

Check in with yourself to see why you're wanting to eat and what you're wanting to use that food for.

Now, like I said, eating to control your emotions isn't something you need to never do. It's not always a bad thing. You're allowed to do it if you want to.

However, when it gets excessive, and when it's the only thing you do to handle your emotions, then that's when it's going to become a problem.

When you're continually eating to avoid or numb your emotions, you're not actually resolving them so they're likely just going to come back. You're going to feel them again when you stop eating. And, it's likely going to turn into a cycle of feeling that feeling, eating, feeling the feeling, eating, and repeat, repeat, repeat. So the eating gets excessive and you end up feeling worse feelings, both emotionally and physically, than the original feeling you were trying to avoid or numb.

And when you're continually eating to feel better, you're not going to learn better coping strategies that won't result in the repeated cycle or in negative outcomes. You'll just keep relying on food, and since you're going to feel uncomfortable emotions and want to feel better on most days, if not every day, then you're going to be overeating, or bingeing most days, if not every day.

Eating can't be the only thing you rely on to deal with your emotions. They need to be felt and gone through and need to be resolved. That's how you're truly going to feel better.

Now, let's talk about eating for enjoyment.

For most people, they want this to be the only reason why they eat when they're not hungry.

They want to eat for pleasure, truly feel good about what they're eating, feel good afterward, and love their decision to eat it.

Eating for pleasure really can be a wonderful experience without consequence and can bring you true joy.

However, just like with eating to control your emotions, there's more to this.

Eating for pleasure can be great but, when it gets excessive, that's when it becomes a problem.

And really, that's when it stops being pleasurable.

If you're going to eat for pleasure, make sure the whole experience is pleasurable – before, during, and after.

For most of us, when it starts getting into excessive territory, the pleasure can decrease a lot for a few different reasons.

Your stomach starts to not feel good because it's getting too full which takes away from the pleasure, or you're questioning your eating which is taking away from the pleasure, or maybe your taste buds are dulling so the food isn't actually tasting as good as it was.

And, when you eat in excess, you're going to experience the opposite of pleasure once you've finished eating.

When you're eating for pleasure, make it an experience that you feel good about before, during, and after.

That's what makes for a truly pleasurable experience.

Sometimes we think that more will be better. We get this idea in our heads that more food means more pleasure.

But that's not usually the case because more can start taking away pleasure.

What's really better when it comes to eating joy food is eating a moderate amount. You get the pleasure and you feel good afterward.

What's also important to note, is that although it's totally fine to eat for pleasure, it can't be your only source of pleasure, just like how eating to control your emotions can't be your only way to handle your emotions.

You're going to want pleasure every day, simply because you're a human and we are innately pleasure seekers. And if food is your only source of pleasure, then you're going to be overeating or bingeing every day as you're trying to get that pleasure you desire.

So yes, eating for pleasure can be wonderful but, when it's excessive, that's when it becomes a problem.

So basically here's the lesson I want you to take from this.

You can eat for whatever reason you want but, be conscious of what the reason is so you can make an informed decision.

Maybe you don't really want to be eating to control your emotions, maybe you do. Maybe you don't want to eat to get your pleasure right now, or maybe you do. It's your decision to make but make sure you're aware of this decision and what you're wanting that food to do for you.

And the other part of the lesson, is that the real problem is excessiveness. It's not necessarily the reason for eating, it's the amount you're eating. Both eating for enjoyment and eating to control your emotions can be fine but it's when it becomes excessive and you're doing it too much that they both can become a problem.

The main goal here is to feel good after eating, not just during. So think about your future self and do what will help them to feel good too, not just your present self.

Alright, that's what I have for you today and I just want to say, I totally understand that not eating in excess is easier said than done. I mean, that's why I have this entire podcast, right? To help you to stop doing that. And it's also why I have The Stop Binge Eating Program where I can give you direct and personalized help to stop doing it.

So if you want my help, come join me in the program. Go to coachkir.com/group to register and remember, registration for this round will be closing in two days, on Thursday August 29th of 2024 at 12pm ET.

Alright, be conscious of what you're using that food for, choose to eat for reasons you like, and I'll talk to you again next time. Bye bye.