THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

with Kirstin Sarfde

Ep #318: Which Types of Eating to Stop, Increase, and Decrease

Hi! In today's episode, I want to clearly define the different types of eating you might experience and help you to set realistic goals with each type.

This is important because many people get frustrated with themselves because they set goals that are actually unrealistic and they're just not able to achieve them. They try to eliminate certain behaviors that are very difficult to eliminate completely and also not always necessary to eliminate.

What usually happens is that they try to become a perfect eater and perfection with your eating is not only very difficult to maintain but again, it's not always necessary and can just add unnecessary stress, obsession, guilt, and deprivation to your life.

So let's make sure that doesn't happen to you.

So, I'll first begin with listing out the different types of eating you might experience. These are the ones that people who binge eat most commonly engage in and, I'll give you the basic definition for each.

First there is binge eating which can be described as eating an excessive amount of food in a short period of time, usually to the point of feeling extremely full, while feeling out of control, usually eating quickly, and afterward feeling intense shame and other negative emotions.

Overeating is a less intense version of binge eating. Either you're eating past full, but not in as much excess as binge eating, so it's a smaller amount of food but still more than your body would like for you to eat, so you feel anywhere from a little bit too full to definitely too full, or you're eating when you're not hungry and are basically just eating because you want to eat which could be too much food for your body, more than what it requires for fuel. Also, there isn't a sense of feeling out of control, or

if there is it's much less intense than with binge eating, and afterward any negative emotions you feel are less intense than if you binge.

Emotional eating is when you eat in response to emotions so that would include stress eating, guilt eating, lonely eating, happy eating, any time you eat because you're trying to avoid or extend and emotion. And emotional eating, most of the time, would also be considered over eating because again, you're not eating because your body is asking for fuel, so you're most likely eating beyond what your body would like for you to eat.

Mindless eating is eating without paying attention to what you're eating. Your mind is not on your food, it is elsewhere.

Mind*ful* eating which is the opposite, is when you are putting your full attention on the food you're eating so you're being mindful of what you're eating.

Fuel Eating is eating to fuel your body so this is when you're feeling hungry and you're eating nutrient dense foods that are nourishing for your body and you're stopping when you're full, so when your body is properly fueled.

And Joy Eating is when you're eating just for the fun of it. You're eating for pleasure, you might be hungry, you might not be, and you're stopping eating while you still feel good so you can experience pleasure and joy after eating too. You feel good about what you ate, and the amount, so you don't go from pleasure while eating to feeling that guilt, shame, or regret afterward. You keep feeling good.

So that is the list. And in that list, there is only one that I recommend that you work on eliminating. And that is binge eating.

Binge eating is something that you can completely stop doing, never do again, and completely eliminate from you life.

I honestly believe that is a realistic goal for all of you. I really do.

Now, you might be wondering, what about overeating, emotional eating, and mindless eating. Why didn't I include those in the elimination goal?

Simply because for most people, it is just unrealistic to eliminate them.

With overeating, most of us eat when we're with other people, when there are distractions, or we're eating food that's really good and we don't want to stop, or maybe we're alone and we're thinking deeply about something else.

When any of this is happening, you might miss your fullness signal and end up overeating. You might not be paying attention to your body when the fullness signal happens.

And that's okay. It's totally normal and this happens to most people at some point. We aren't going to catch the signal and make the decision to stop right when we feel it every single time.

Because, we're not perfect. We're not supposed to be perfect eaters. We're not going to stop when we're full perfectly every time. So sometimes, you might overeat.

But, like I said, you're going to work on decreasing it so it's not happening all the time, and so it's something that doesn't happen much more than it does. That is a realistic goal.

And the same will go for mindless eating as well.

Most of us eat mindlessly sometimes whether it's out of habit, or because again we're distracted by something else like people or the television or something we're reading or something we're thinking about, so we don't end up giving our full attention to the food we're eating.

And with emotional eating, it's happening basically any time that you're eating when you're not hungry. If you're not hungry, you're eating because you're wanting to feel something. That sometimes might be joy, or pleasure, or comfort, or soothing, or numbness.

And honestly, if you're eating for emotional reasons, and you stop before you feel too full, and it doesn't actually have a negative impact on you, then it's not necessary to eliminate it.

But will it be good for you to do it a lot? Probably not. Your body and mind probably wouldn't appreciate that.

So that is something best done less and not all the time. You don't need to eliminate it but, be purposeful with it and if you currently do it a lot, it could be beneficial to decrease it.

So overeating, mindless eating, and emotional eating are ways of eating that I suggest you work on decreasing if you're doing them alot.

For most of you, stopping entirely forever would be unrealistic and again, cause a lot of frustration for you.

Now, what I suggest you increase if you're not doing them a lot are mindful eating and fuel eating.

So that means you're being mindful of what you're eating, so you're paying attention and are being intentional with what you're eating, that's the mindful eating, and for fuel eating, you're eating according to your body's signals, so if you're hungry you're eating, and when you're full you stop, and you're also fueling your body with nutrients to help your body and brain function at their best.

So assess how often you're doing those and if it would be helpful for you to increase them, go for it.

And what's worth repeating is that you don't need to be mindful and fueling with only nutrient dense foods 100% of the time. You could do them less than 100% of the time and still feel great. You don't need to be perfect. Increasing does not mean perfect, it just means more if there is room for more.

And with that, there's that final way of eating that I listed, Joy Eating, that is going to be so helpful for you to include in your life.

Food doesn't have to be "just fuel." It's really not just fuel. There is so much pleasurable food out there that isn't nutrient dense, that tastes delicious, and that can be a useful part of our day to day diets.

And when you do include joy eating into your life, you won't feel deprived of food pleasure and you won't feel strong urges to binge on what you never allow yourself to eat. You'll enjoy the food pleasures, not to fuel your body but just for enjoyment, and it will just be a normal part of your life.

Now, when it comes to increasing and decreasing joy eating, this is going to be an individual thing.

Some of you will greatly benefit from less joy eating because the amount you're doing is causing you to not feel your best.

And some of you will greatly benefit from more joy eating because you've been denying yourself of so much and feeling restricted and it's a cause of your urges to binge. So instead of regularly joy eating, you're binge eating to try and get the food joy you haven't been allowing.

So assess yourself, with all of these really, and set realistic goals for yourself.

Consider how you imagine a quote "normal" eater would eat, and consider how you truly want to eat, and with these considerations in mind, find a realistic goal for each of the ways of eating I talked about today.

And I highly recommend that your goal is not to be a perfect eater, but the kind of eater that allows you to feel your best.

And sometimes, that might include overeating, mindless eating, or emotional eating, and that can be okay if you're not doing it excessively. Once in awhile is probably not a problem and isn't going to have a huge effect. So you don't need to make a huge deal about it.

And eating to feel your best will also include mindful eating, fuel eating, and joy eating.

But what it doesn't have to include is binge eating. That one can go. That one is completely unnecessary to keep around and if you do accidentally find yourself overeating, mindlessly eating, or emotionally eating, you can stop yourself before it turns into an excessive binge.

You really can.

It's so important that you don't give up on yourself if you're doing one of those because giving up will shift it from quote "normal extra" eating to binge eating.

Don't give up on eating how you truly want to be eating if you over eat, mindlessly eat, or emotionally eat. Don't tell yourself you're already doing it so you might as well keep going or that you ruined your day.

Again, those kinds of eating can be part of a healthy diet, can be part of a quote "normal" diet. Let them be part of yours. So if they happen, it's okay, you will be more conscious moving forward so you're not doing it all time.

Alright, so I hope that gave you some clarity into these different types of eating so you can decide what you want to do more of, less of, and what you want to stop so you can create realistic, achievable, maintainable goals.

You got this.

Alright, I'll talk to you next time, bye bye.