

# THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Ep #320: How to Build Emotional Endurance

Hi! Today I'm going to talk with you about emotional endurance.

For many people, one of the reasons why they binge eat, and why they over eat, is because they aren't willing to feel their uncomfortable emotions.

They use food as a way to distract from, avoid, or numb their emotions.

So they might eat as soon as they feel an uncomfortable emotion or, they feel it for some time but then get to the point where they're just no longer willing to feel it anymore and they eat.

And they keep eating because they know that once they stop, they'll be back to feeling how they were feeling before.

If eating is the only thing keeping them from feeling that uncomfortable emotion, they don't want to stop doing it.

But, if they were willing to feel those uncomfortable emotions, then they would be okay with stopping eating and with not eating at all.

They'd just feel the emotions without trying to distract from them, avoid them, or numb them.

If they were willing to just feel the emotions then the overeating and bingeing just wouldn't happen for that reason.

So if you are one of these people who is unwilling to feel uncomfortable emotions, and if you don't want to be eating, overeating, or bingeing anytime you feel an uncomfortable emotion, it's important that you work on your emotional endurance.

You're probably familiar with endurance as it relates to physical activity so if you have a lot of endurance, you can be active for a longer period of time.

And it's the same idea for emotional endurance.

The more emotional endurance you have, the longer you can feel the emotion. Or really, the longer you will be willing to feel the emotion because you already can feel the emotion for as long as it's there, you have the ability to feel the emotion, you're just not willing to do it yet.

You don't yet have the willingness to do it.

And that might be because you're afraid to feel the emotions, or you just don't want to feel the discomfort, or you don't think you can feel it.

But you can become more willing, less afraid, and more confident a little bit at a time.

A little bit at a time, you'll build your emotional endurance so you will be willing to endure the discomfort of your emotions.

You'll get to the point where you'll be willing to feel them as long as they're there and won't run to food to distract from, avoid, or numb them.

Now, the "little bit at a time" thing is going to be really important for a lot of you.

Just like you're not going to go from never running to running a marathon, you're unlikely going to go from never feeling your emotions to feeling your uncomfortable emotions for a long period of time until they pass and you don't feel them anymore.

So give yourself time to work up to it.

Start small.

Commit to feeling uncomfortable emotions for as little as 15 seconds. Or choose what feels like a doable amount of time for you to start with so it might be more, might be less.

And here's the thing. Maybe you do eat after those 15 seconds and if you do, that's okay. You're just getting started.

Even if you didn't succeed at not eating, you did succeed at feeling uncomfortable for 15 seconds and that matters. That's going to be a building block toward feeling for longer.

And when you feel like you're ready to go longer, challenge yourself to go longer. And you'll keep adding time, a little at a time when you feel like you're ready, just like you'd keep adding time or miles to your run as you're working toward running a marathon.

So celebrate the time you're spending feeling, even if you still end up eating afterward. You will ultimately get to the point where you're feeling without eating at all if you are practicing feeling and increasing the amount of time a little at a time.

Be proud of the progress you *are* making which will encourage you keep on going.

Now, it's important to know that it's not just putting in the time that's going to build your emotional endurance.

If you're sitting there, feeling the discomfort, and you're hating it, counting down the minutes until you can stop, and thinking about how awful it is, you're not truly building emotional endurance.

You're white-knuckling it.

You're using willpower to get through it.

And that's not sustainable, it's going to be exhausting, and you're not going to want to do that every time you feel an uncomfortable emotion.

The goal here isn't just to get through the emotion, it isn't to just feel it until it passes.

The goal is to be okay with feeling it until it passes.

It's to be okay with feeling it while you're feeling it.

It's to get to the point where you're going to want to choose this over eating and if you're making feeling the discomfort into an excruciating experience, you're not going to want to choose it.

And it doesn't have to be excruciating.

It will be uncomfortable, sure, but you don't have to suffer in it. That's not what I'm asking you to do here. Because all that would be add to the discomfort you're already feeling.

What I'm asking you to do is to allow the discomfort, let it be there, so you're not adding to the discomfort, you're just letting it pass through you.

And in order for you to do that, you'll need to be accepting of the discomfort and be calm with it.

And that's where your self-talk comes in.

How you're talking to yourself about the discomfort, the emotion, the urge you're feeling, and how you're talking about yourself while you're feeling it is going to have a huge impact on your experience of it.

It's either going to make feeling it tolerable and easier or intolerable and harder.

So tell yourself that you're just feeling sensations in your body and they're not going to hurt you, that this is just temporary, that you can do it, that you will be okay, tell yourself something that is accepting of what you're experiencing, that is calming, and that is encouraging.

Talk yourself through it like you would talk a friend through it.

It doesn't have to be a horrible experience.

It can just be an uncomfortable one that is tolerable.

And when it's over, you'll be so happy you did it.

You won't have binged, you'll feel better, and had you binged to avoid, distract from, or numb the emotion, you would be feeling a lot worse.

So again, start small, with an amount of time that feels doable to you. Feel the uncomfortable emotion or urge, and talk yourself through it in an accepting, calming, and encouraging way.

And as you practice doing this in this way, you'll begin to see that it's not so scary, and that it's maybe not as bad as you thought it would be.

You'll see that you can do it and you'll build confidence in yourself.

And you'll see that it really is a better option than bingeing when you look at the big picture, the whole story, and you'll become more willing to do it.

Feeling uncomfortable emotions and urges won't be as big of a deal. You'll just feel them.

And bingeing due to feeling uncomfortable emotions will be a thing of the past for you.

So build up your emotional endurance a little bit at a time.

Become a person who feels without eating.

You can do it.

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