

# **THE STOP BINGE EATING PODCAST**

*with Kirstin Sarfde*

## Episode #323: Small Changes

Hi! Today I'm talking about making small changes.

Too often, people think they need to make huge changes right away, completely change how they are, how they think, and how they behave quickly, in order for them to change.

We'll sometimes tell ourselves that tomorrow we're going to change this, and this, and this.

Tomorrow, we're going to do things completely differently.

Tomorrow, we're going to start doing all the things we want to do and stop doing all the things we want to stop doing.

And maybe we're successful tomorrow. And maybe the next day too, and maybe longer.

But for most people, it's just not going to last.

It's not sustainable.

Not because they're not capable of making those changes and they can't do it.

But because our brains don't like big changes.

Our brains want to conserve energy and do what's easiest. It's just how they are.

Our brains love routine and habit.

So when we challenge our brain to change routines and habits, what it's used to doing, and do harder things that use more energy, which big changes are and will do, our brain is going to resist.

It's not going to be easy for us to adapt.

And you've probably seen so many examples of this in your own life.

I use diets as examples a lot because I bet most, if not all people who listen to this podcast have gone on a diet, or many in their lifetime.

So using that as an example here, we make big changes to what we're eating so we can lose weight fast and soon after, we're back to how we used to eat and we're no longer losing weight anymore and probably gain back what we lost.

Or maybe you make a big change to your morning routine and you do it for a bit but then you're back to what you used to do.

Or you make a big change with your exercise, you're exercising more but over time, you don't keep it up.

Or you make a big change in the way you clean and organize your home, and you do it for a period of time but then you find yourself not doing any of it.

Now, I'm not saying all big changes aren't sustainable all the time.

Some of you maybe have cold turkey quit smoking or quit drinking or made some other immediate big change that you actually have made into a new habit.

But for most people, most of the time, that's not the best way to do it.

A better way would be to make small changes over time.

Now, a lot of you know this. You're aware that it will be easier to make small changes and that small changes will be more sustainable.

But, your impatience gets in the way of you actually doing it.

You want changes faster. You want results faster. You want things to be routine and habit and more natural faster.

But then as I mentioned earlier, you may see changes but it might not stick.

And you keep this cycle going again and again.

You make a big change, you do it for a period of time, then you stop, you're back to how you were before, and repeat, repeat, repeat.

So in the end, it ends up taking longer for you to get to where you want to be. Or maybe you never get to where you want to be because you never do it long enough for it to become a habit and more natural.

But, had you taken your time, and let the change be slow, and build small changes upon small changes, then you would have gotten there.

And yes there may be some moments of two steps forward and one step back but, that's still progress, and definitely more progress than 5 steps forward and 5 steps back.

They say slow and steady wins the race and it really is true when you're doing something that isn't a sprint.

And stopping binge eating isn't a sprint.

You have habits that are causing your binge eating.

And habits aren't going to change overnight.

They're going to change through consistency and repetition over time.

And the smaller the change, the easier it will be to repeat it and be consistent with it.

I see people start incorporating back into their life all the foods they've ever binged on that they're been restricting for so long, they buy them all at once and bring them all home, and then they just can't get a handle on not bingeing on them.

They're doing too much too soon. They're overwhelming themselves.

It would be so much easier if they did just one food at a time.

Work on their thoughts about that one food, get used to being around that one food, and if they overeat or binge on that food, they learn and work on one lesson at a time that they learned from that overeat or binge.

I see people just jump right into trying to allow themselves to feel urges to binge or emotions after not having done it for a very long time, and they might be able to willpower through it at first but then they cave and give in and eat to get out of the emotion or urge again and again.

It would be so much easier if they worked on one component of feeling at a time.

Find one obstacle that's stopping them from feeling, which is almost always a thought that they're thinking.

Some people are afraid to feel the urges and emotions. So you find one reason why you're afraid and you work on that fear. Then once you feel less fearful about that reason, you uncover another one if there is one and overcome that fear.

Some people have a tendency to quit feeling when they've been feeling something for several minutes or hours so they need to find one reason why they quit. Then they practice overcoming that reason, that justification they use for quitting. And then they uncover the next and work on that.

And there are so many things that can contribute to why a person binge eats.

The main two reasons are because they're overly restrictive with their eating and because they're not willing to feel emotions.

But within those reasons are so many reasons why they might be restricting too much and not feeling.

In my Stop Binge Eating Program, every week, as a group, we're talking about different topics, different examples, different scenarios, different circumstances, different emotions, different thoughts, different excuses and justifications, and often, people in the group want to work on everything all at once.

And I encourage again and again to not do that.

You *will* work on everything, everything you want to change will get changed, just not all at the same time.

So start with what you think will be the most impactful for you right now.

Start with what you think will be the most doable for you right now.

Start with something that will help you progress and that you think will be somewhat easy for you to accomplish so you can actually start making changes, and continue making changes.

And what's going to be an extremely useful byproduct of working on making small changes is more confidence.

You're seeing that you really can do something different than you have been.

When you actually do the small change, you get to be proud of yourself.

You create evidence of what you're capable of.

You feel good about yourself.

You feel accomplished.

You build trust.

But, you're only going to get all that if you appreciate the small change.

Too often, people dismiss these accomplishments.

They tell themselves it's not enough.

And listen, is it enough to become a completely different person in one day? No.

Is it enough to completely change your eating habits in a matter of days? No.

But, is it enough for today? It absolutely can be.

And I say “it can be” because it’s important to assess what you’re working on.

If the change you’ve been working on has in fact become more natural and more habitual and easier then just accomplishing that each day isn’t going to be enough.

If there is something else that you need to work on, it’s important to move on to the next small change when it’s time.

One of my group members has been working on her negative self-talk. She’s been putting herself down and being hard on herself for her entire life. So she’s been working on, and improving so much on, the way that she speaks to herself.

One day at a time, one thought at a time, one belief about herself at a time, she has made noticeable progress with her self-talk.

And she thought that when she got better at her self-talk that she wouldn’t binge anymore.

But, she still needs to make more small changes in order to completely stop bingeing.

What she’s done so far is absolutely an important piece of the stopping binge eating puzzle. Having neutral to positive self-talk is so important because it will affect how you feel and how you behave.

Negative self-talk is one reason why so many people don’t achieve goals, don’t feel their best, don’t make progress, and why so many people quit on themselves.

Because when you tell yourself that you’re a failure, a loser, too weak, incapable, that you can’t do it, that you’ll never be able to do it, that you’re not good enough, that you’re hopeless, then you’re going to feel hopeless, inadequate, weak, powerless, feelings that are going to drive you to quit on yourself.

So her working on her self-talk is definitely moving her in the right direction because how her self-talk was before was making it harder for her to stop binge eating.

But, as I said, there is still more change for her to make.

So just doing that every day isn’t going to be enough.

It was definitely enough for awhile but, now it’s time to work on another small change.

Now, she needs to do some work on feeling her emotions instead of eating to numb or distract from her emotions.

So she’s going to work on small changes to become better at allowing herself to feel feelings.

And she's going to work on managing her thoughts so she's not intensifying her emotions and causing herself to compound emotions and causing herself to feel uncomfortable emotions for an extended time, longer than necessary.

And she's only going to do as much as feels doable and not overwhelm herself and not try to do too much at once.

And it's going to progress her even more and move her forward even more toward stopping binge eating completely.

You're going to do the same.

Even if you aren't bingeing less right away, know that you're doing things that will eventually compound into less bingeing, and eventually no bingeing.

Know that what you're doing matters and *is* helping.

Know that any change, no matter how small, will make a difference.

Be patient.

Do what feels doable.

Experience the small wins and be so proud of them.

Give yourself credit for them.

And when you feel like what you've been working on changing is getting pretty easy, work on one more small change. Keep moving forward, one step at a time.

You got this.

Bye bye.